

THE STRAITS TIMES

Home Tender, touching thing called love B4&5



Life Black-and-white and beautiful D8



Life New drugs to treat migraine D1&2



Sport 7 marathons in 7 days at age 67 C6



HDB launches first of its new neighbourhood centres

Centre in Punggol developed by HDB after taking in residents' feedback

Joanna Seow

The first of a new generation of neighbourhood malls, developed by the Housing Board with the feedback of residents, has opened in Punggol.

Oasis Terraces, a seven-storey mall next to Oasis LRT station, has more open spaces for people to gather and a tenant mix meant to address the needs of those living in the neighbourhood.

Based on feedback gathered in 2014 during early planning stages, the waterfront development includes family-friendly eateries, playgrounds, a 24-hour fitness centre and a supermarket that stays open until 11pm.

More of such projects are in the pipeline. Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong, who opened Oasis Terraces yesterday, said there will be five more coming up in the next three years.

Citing his experience growing up in Marine Terrace, he said HDB centres foster a special sense of emotional connection as people frequent the same shops and children play with neighbours in the community spaces.

"It's what planners call a third place, a place outside of home and work where people get together, socialise, and you can build that sense of community. That's why HDB neighbourhood centres are special, and that's why we are committed to building them," he said at the new mall's community plaza.

Oasis Terraces marks the comeback of HDB in building and developing these retail spaces in the heartland, called neighbourhood centres. In 2000, it allowed private



Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong with children on the rooftop of Oasis Terraces yesterday. The mall in Punggol has community gardens and a fitness corner on the roof, as well as 106 shops. ST PHOTO: JEREMY KWAN

developers to take the lead to tap their expertise in developing suburban commercial malls.

But in 2015, HDB decided to take over again, as the private developers were not keen to build in new towns until a critical mass of residents moved in. This meant those who moved in earlier did not have sufficient amenities.

Mr Wong said that as master planner, HDB can ensure new centres are well integrated with transportation nodes and the overall plans for the towns. And unlike a private developer, HDB is not out to maximise commercial returns, so the centres are designed with more community spaces for residents to mingle in.

Oasis Terraces, for instance, has community gardens and a fitness corner on the rooftop, besides its 106 shops.

Shops are allocated to tenants through a tender process, and decisions are based not just on price but also on qualitative factors such as the business concept and operating model, said Mr Wong. This allows HDB to better manage the tenant mix to address residents' needs so centres are not dominated by a certain type of shop or service, he said.

Of the five more new-generation neighbourhood malls being built, Buangkok Square in Hougang will start operating this year. Canberra Plaza in Sembawang will see works

completed this year, Hougang Rivercourt in Hougang and Northshore Plaza in Punggol will be completed next year, and Anchorvale Village in Sengkang by 2022.

There are a total of 110 existing neighbourhood centres across Singapore, some of which comprise low-rise shop units, which are being upgraded over time.

Other pioneering features of Oasis Terraces include an entrepreneur cluster for start-ups to run physical stores at lower rents than in other commercial buildings.

About 30 Punggol residents took part in four focus-group discussions about Oasis Terraces from June to August 2014. They had indi-

cated they wanted shops and facilities that open late, more family-friendly dining options as well as sports and recreation facilities.

Punggol residents Benjamin Ho, 38, and Christina Tan, 37, said they have been visiting the mall almost every day since last year for meals after picking up their two sons from school.

"There's more variety with the foodcourt... Before this, we would eat at coffee shops but there were limited options," said Mr Ho, who also uses the gym.

joseow@sph.com.sg

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A6

Catch ST's live Budget coverage from 3.30pm

Amid predictions that an election will be called this year and global trade tensions providing a challenging environment for businesses, today's Budget could be a critical one.

The Straits Times will be providing live coverage as Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat announces the details in Parliament from 3.30pm.

There will be live streaming of his speech and a live blog on our website (straitstimes.com), as well as a Budget microsite and updates on our Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Readers can also sign up for e-mail updates of today's proceedings.

At 6.30pm, ST columnists will be discussing the outcome on our Facebook Live show, The Budget & You: Why It Matters.

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A4

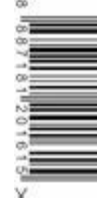
Take in captured ISIS fighters, Trump tells allies

US President Donald Trump has demanded that Europe take in hundreds of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) fighters captured in Syria, threatening that the United States would otherwise be forced to release them.

Mr Trump said in a series of Twitter messages that the terror group's self-proclaimed caliphate was "ready to fall" and that the US was asking European allies to take back more than 800 ISIS fighters captured in Syria and put them on trial.

"Time for others to step up and do the job that they are so capable of doing," he added.

SEE TOP OF THE NEWS A7



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OPENS THIS WEEK

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NEW YORK POST

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1 **Ting Wen sets new record**
National swimmer Quah Ting Wen yesterday set a national record in the women's 100m freestyle at the Singapore Swim Series at the OCBC Aquatic Centre, clocking 55.41 seconds to better her 2016 mark of 55.52. The 26-year-old credited a month-long training stint in Texas with younger sister Jing Wen for helping her rediscover her passion for swimming.

SPORT C10



Quah Ting Wen diving off the blocks in the women's 100m freestyle at the OCBC Aquatic Centre yesterday. PHOTO: SINGAPORE SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

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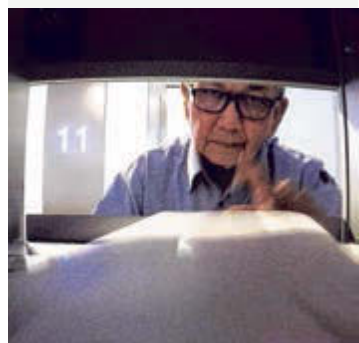
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VIDEO

A postman's workday

With postal services in the spotlight, The Straits Times followed Mr Rajab Abu Noh, who has been delivering mail for 43 years, to better understand a postman's workday.
<http://str.sg/postman>

2 New neighbourhood centre

The first of a new generation of neighbourhood centres, developed by the Housing Board with the feedback of residents, has opened in Punggol. Oasis Terraces (right) has more open spaces for people to gather and a tenant mix meant to address the needs of those living in the neighbourhood. More of such projects are in the pipeline.

TOP OF THE NEWS A1



ST PHOTO: JOANNA SEOW

5 Rakhine woos investors

Myanmar's second-poorest state Rakhine is gearing up for its first investment fair on Thursday. This will be held in Ngapali beach, a resort area far from the violence that has displaced hundreds of thousands of residents. **WORLD A12**

6 Europe's populist tsunami

The populist backlash sweeping Europe is not just a far-right phenomenon. Old established political parties are being buffeted by both the far left and far right amid a failure to address deep economic and social grievances, says global affairs correspondent Jonathan Eyal (below). **OPINION A14**



7 Signs omit some languages

Signs omit some languages
A Straits Times check of 36 signs at memorials, national monuments, tourist attractions and public institutions found that about 40 per cent did not have all four official languages. The failure to include all official languages in public signs and plaques was highlighted by former foreign minister George Yeo last month. **HOME B1**

8 Debate over proposed law

The Criminal Law Reform Bill presented in Parliament last week makes it an offence to have an exploitative sexual relationship with anyone aged between 16 and 18, a move that has sparked debate. While most experts agreed it is necessary to protect minors, some wondered if there would be unintended effects. **HOME B2**

9 Looking out for Fed update

Investors will scrutinise the Federal Open Market Committee's January meeting minutes for rate-hike indications when they are released on Thursday. **BUSINESS C2**

10 S'pore artist wins award

Singaporean watercolourist Ong Kim Seng, 73, has won his ninth award from the renowned American Watercolour Society for his painting, Mount Agung Before Eruption. He is the only Asia-based watercolourist to have bagged this many accolades. **LIFE D7**



VIDEO

Journey to philanthropy

In his 20s, Mr Scott Harrison worked as a nightclub promoter. But a volunteering trip in 2004 changed his life. The 43-year-old has since started an organisation that provides clean water to millions of people in developing nations.
<http://str.sg/scottharrison>



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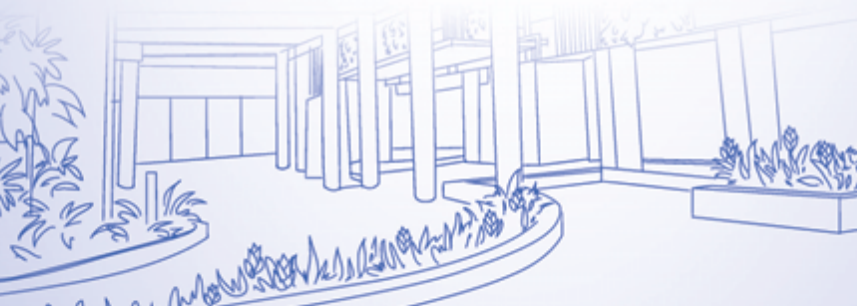
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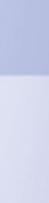
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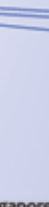
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Above: Madam Yvonne Kong, whose two children, Gabriel and Natalie, are studying at Jurong West Primary, is relieved that the school does not have a drink stall. "They can pick up the habit of drinking water instead of sugary drinks," she says.



Right: Chin Ip of Xishan Primary queueing up to refill his water bottle. ST PHOTOS: KHALID BABA, GAVIN FOO

More primary schools keep out sugary drinks

At least three have done away with drink stalls altogether as war on sugar heats up

Calvin Yang

Some primary schools are stepping up the war on sugar by halting the sale of sweet drinks to pupils. At least three primary schools have done away with drink stalls – previously a regular feature in canteens – altogether, a check by The Straits Times has found. More than a dozen others have banned certain drinks from the stalls on their premises.

This comes against the backdrop of the tightening of sugar guidelines for beverages sold in schools in recent years. Jurong West Primary School, for instance, has not had a drink stall since May 2017, when the last stall owner discontinued her lease. Instead, pupils bring their own drinks from home, usually water or juices, said Mr Lim Chin Guan, the vice-principal. Vending machines dispensing low-sugar drinks are available to pupils.

Mr Lim said the best time for pupils to adopt healthy habits is at a young age. "On top of educating students on healthy eating habits, we also want to lead by example by not having a drink stall which can be a convenient source of sugary drinks," he said. Riverside Primary has never had a drink stall since it began taking in pupils in 2013. It also does not have any drink vending machine. Pupils bring along water bottles every day and refill them regularly at water coolers. CHIJ Our Lady Queen of Peace is another primary school to have done away with a drink stall. Since 2017, all mainstream

schools have adopted the Healthy Meals in Schools Programme, a Health Promotion Board (HPB) initiative to get children to cultivate healthy eating habits from a young age. Getting children to drink more water and have fewer sweet drinks is part of the effort. Under the programme, sports drinks, for example, should not contain more than 6g of sugar per 100ml. Drinks that have permitted intense sweeteners are also not allowed for sale. The Ministry of Education and HPB said audit checks are carried out to ensure schools' adherence to the sugar guidelines under the programme. Some schools such as Xishan Pri-

mary, which banned the sale of carbonated drinks and bottled drinks in its canteen two years ago, have held regular assembly talks on healthy eating habits and sugar content in drinks such as bubble tea. "This helps them better understand the impact of their personal choices on their health," said Mrs Anne Quek, principal of the school in Yishun. Parents said they are glad that schools are taking steps to stop the sales of sugary drinks. Madam Yvonne Kong, whose two children, Gabriel, 10, and Natalie, eight, are studying at Jurong West Primary, said: "Parents cannot always be in school to monitor what their kids eat or drink. It is good that their school doesn't have a drink stall. They can pick up the habit of drinking water instead of sugary drinks." Madam Chen Chiau Hong, a housewife whose 10-year-old son Chin Ip attends Xishan Primary, said: "So whatever the children choose, it is still healthier than what is sold outside." Many pupils such as Chin Ip, a Primary 4 pupil who said he bought sugary drinks only once in a while as a treat, have welcomed the move

by schools. "Too much sugary drinks is not good for my health," he said. "Whenever I am thirsty, I would drink plain water." Research has shown that sugary drinks provide little or no nutritional benefit for growing children. Nutritionist Pooja Vig of The Nutrition Clinic noted that sugar could also be highly addictive. "It's especially important to limit sugar because not only does sugar affect weight and dental health, but it can also affect mood and behaviour. In some instances, sugar can cause hyperactivity and interfere in a child's ability to concentrate," she said. Mr Derrick Ong, principal dietitian at Eat Right Nutrition Consultancy, pointed out that healthy habits inculcated from a young age tend to persist into adulthood, which would go a long way towards preventing chronic conditions such as diabetes. The next step is for parents to be educated on the ways to encourage their children to limit sugar, said Singapore University of Technology and Design faculty fellow Andrew Yee, who has done research on health communication.

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Look out for real-time Budget updates, live discussion and in-depth analysis

Goh Yan Han

This year's Budget will be announced by Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat in Parliament at 3.30pm today.

Will this be an election Budget, amid expectations that early polls may be called this year? Will there be an increase in government spending? What will Mr Heng prioritise as a leader of the ruling People's Action Party's fourth-generation team?

Follow The Straits Times' live coverage of the Budget for answers to these questions.

Here's what readers and viewers can expect today:

- Real-time updates: Watch a live stream of the speech and get instant updates through ST's Budget live blog on straitstimes.com
- There will be more reports on the Budget microsite at str.sg/budget2019, as well as on ST's Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Live discussion: Join ST columnists at 6.30pm for a Facebook Live show, The Budget & You: Why It Matters. The panellists – associate editor Ravi

Velloor, opinion editor Chua Mui Hoong and senior health correspondent Salma Khalik – will answer questions from viewers. Send them your questions in the comments section during the show on ST's Facebook page.

- Quick summary: Get Budget highlights delivered to your e-mail inbox, right after the speech. Sign up now for the special-edition newsletter at str.sg/newsletters.
- In-depth analysis: Associate editor Vikram Khanna, who expects an expansionary Budget that will be high on government spending, will give his take on how the measures will affect Singapore's economy and its ability to meet future challenges. Read it on straitstimes.com

Ms Chua, 50, who will take part in the Facebook Live discussion, said this will be the first Budget presented by Mr Heng as a clear successor to Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

"Mr Heng has an opportunity to take back the political initiative from critics, with a Budget speech and fiscal policy that bring everyone, including naysayers, on board the journey to the future,"

said Ms Chua. Ms Khalik, 64, will discuss the much talked about Merdeka Generation Package. The multibillion-dollar package for Singaporeans born in the 1950s will help cushion the impact of rising healthcare costs for nearly half a million people.

Mr Velloor, 60, noted that this is a particularly critical year for the Budget amid an increasingly challenging external environment, including trade tensions between the United States and China. "We can expect Mr Heng to talk about ways to help companies grow in the region and have a wider footprint in Asia," he said.

Multimedia journalist Hairianto Diman, 31, will facilitate the discussion. Pressed for time on your way home? Tune in to the post-Budget discussion on Money FM 89.3 at 7pm today.

Readers can also look out for more Budget special reports in the print edition of ST tomorrow.

For post-Budget analysis, there will be the ST-UOB Budget Roundtable discussion with economists and trade union representatives. Follow the discussion, which will be moderated by Mr Khanna, 62, on ST's website next Sunday.

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BUDGET 2019

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Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat will deliver the Budget statement today at 3.30pm

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- Facebook Live show at 6.30pm with ST columnists Chua Mui Hoong, Ravi Velloor and Salma Khalik, moderated by Hairianto Diman. They will analyse the impact of key announcements and answer questions from viewers



- Live broadcast of post-Budget discussion on Money FM 89.3 at 7pm
- Analyses of what the Budget means to you
- Post-Budget roundtable with industry experts led by ST associate editor Vikram Khanna



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MULTI-YEAR EFFORT

It will be a significant thrust... and a multi-year effort which would significantly improve the education system.



EDUCATION MINISTER ONG YE KUNG, on his ministry's plans to further push students to "learn for life".

Education Minister Ong Ye Kung meeting residents on his community visit to Sengkang Central yesterday. Mr Ong said the fourth-generation leaders have been working together on the Budget, which will be delivered by Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat this afternoon. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

More plans afoot to encourage learning for life: Ong Ye Kung

Efforts part of push to move away from narrow focus on grades, with details to be unveiled during Budget debate

Cara Wong

Exams have been scrapped, and younger pupils are going through the school year test-free. Efforts to help children from disadvantaged homes level up have redoubled.

More plans are afoot to further push students to "learn for life", as part of the Ministry of Education's efforts to move away from a narrow focus on grades, said Education Minister Ong Ye Kung yesterday.

"It will be a significant thrust...

and a multi-year effort which would significantly improve the education system," he said.

The details will be announced during his ministry's debate on its spending plans following the Budget's delivery today.

Mr Ong was one of three Cabinet ministers who spoke briefly on the Budget while out and about at separate community events yesterday.

While they were tight-lipped on the Budget's details, all three ministers – Mr Ong, Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing and Com-

munications and Information Minister S. Iswaran – raised the much-talked about Merdeka Generation Package as a highlight of this year's Budget, which will be delivered by Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat in Parliament at 3.30pm today.

Mr Heng is expected to give details of the help that baby boomers born in the 1950s will receive from the Government.

Mr Chan said that another key focus of this year's Budget would be on fostering better cooperation between the Government and businesses and social organisations to build a stronger and more resilient economy.

"This would allow our enterprises to provide better job opportunities

for all Singaporeans," said Mr Chan at the Teochew Poit Ip Huay Kuan's Chinese New Year celebration.

Mr Iswaran, who was at a West Coast GRC event and was asked if there will be new initiatives to help businesses to plug in to the digital economy, said that it is an ongoing effort, including getting smaller and medium-sized enterprises involved.

"That's critical because they really move the needle for us in terms of the economy, if they plug in to the digital economy," said Mr Iswaran.

At a separate event in Sengkang Central, Mr Ong said that the yet-to-be-announced efforts by his ministry would add to previous initiatives, which include reducing the exam load and setting up an inter-

agency task force to help children from disadvantaged homes.

Mr Ong said the fourth-generation leaders have been working together on the Budget, which will be the first presented by Mr Heng since he was chosen by his peers to be the next prime minister.

"Since 2015, we've been working together on building a future economy... and also on various measures from healthcare and the Merdeka Generation Package to changes we are making to the education system," said Mr Ong.

Last night, Mr Heng posted a video on social media in which he urged Singaporeans to not just look at this year's Budget in isolation from plans announced in previous years that remain in place.

"The Budget is a multi-year plan. We do not just concentrate on what is in it for me in this Budget, but what is in it for all of us, and how we can use whatever public funding we are able to provide to catalyse deep changes in our society, in our economy, and in that way, Singapore can stand tall in the world."

carawong@sph.com.sg

• Additional reporting by Venessa Lee

Ministers on track to visit all constituencies by mid-2020

Younger Cabinet ministers have completed one-third of the 90 visits they are making to all constituencies in Singapore by the middle of next year, as part of an effort to get a better sense of ground sentiment.

Education Minister Ong Ye Kung, who is coordinating the weekly vis-

its which started last July, said yesterday that they are on schedule.

"We have done about 30; 60 more to go. If we work hard, maybe we can finish it in a year and three months."

He added: "Every week, we are out here in the open, and the residents are sometimes surprised to

see us, but I think we get conversations going, so we have a good sense of ground worries, ground concerns."

He was accompanied on his visit to Sengkang Central by Senior Minister of State for Culture, Community and Youth, and Communications

and Information Sim Ann, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Home Affairs and Health Amrin Amin, and Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, and Culture, Community and Youth Baey Yam Keng.

Asked if the visits are part of a shifting of gears for a general election,

Mr Ong said: "If it's a shifting of gears, we would have started three years ago, because we have been walking the ground quite hard for the last three years. The day we finish (an) election, we change gear to prepare for the next election."

Said Mr Ong: "Residents will typi-

cally bring up problems in their own constituencies whenever you see them, but when you visit other areas, you listen to slightly different opinions, so our overall understanding would be better."

He added that Cabinet ministers have to invest in regular visits to better connect with the people, and to understand their worries and concerns.

Cara Wong

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Submarine crew can stealthily take out target within minutes

RSN submariners go through tough mental and physical training to prepare for missions at sea

Lim Min Zhang

A Singapore submarine lies submerged, listening intently for the tell-tale sound of a target's propellers cutting through the water.

Once its target is found, a well-trained crew can, within minutes, fire a torpedo at it from miles away and remain undetected – a feat that Singapore's submarines have achieved multiple times in naval exercises over the years, even with established navies.

Other than being able to take out targets stealthily, they are able to stay submerged for weeks at a time, perform reconnaissance missions and take part in exercises as far as in the Andaman Sea – more than 1,400km from Singapore.

To prepare for such missions, submariners go through tough physical and mental training, such as being blindfolded to simulate working in a darkened environment, and escape-tower training so that they are able to get away from a submarine in emergency situations.

The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) gave a rare look into the training of its submarine crew ahead of today's launch of the first Type 218SG submarine by Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen in the city of Kiel in Germany. The first of the four Type 218SG submarines, built by German defence contractor



Submarine crew members being trained using the Submarine Combat Tactical Trainer at the RSS Singapura-Changi Naval Base's Submarine Training Centre. Submariners currently go through a nine-month course. PHOTO: MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

ThyssenKrupp Marine System, will be delivered from 2021.

The RSN has conducted more than 20 years of submarine training and operations since it began acquiring four Swedish Sjöormen-class submarines second-hand between 1995 and 1997, which underwent refurbishment and were named Challenger-class vessels.

In 2005, it bought and upgraded a pair of Swedish Västergötland-class submarines that are now

called Archer-class vessels.

While details of training improvements leading up to the transition to operate in the Type 218SG were not available, the navy shared how two simulators are used to sharpen submariners' skills in combat and ship operation.

They are the Submarine Combat Tactical Trainer and the Submarine Steering and Diving Trainer at the RSS Singapura-Changi Naval Base's Submarine Training Centre, which

was launched in 2015.

For the Type 218SG, the RSN is also developing a Submarine Trainer Suite, including simulators such as the Command Team Trainer and the Steering and Diving Trainer to train submariners in realistic conditions.

Submariners now go through a nine-month course, which the navy is hoping to shorten to six months with the use of virtual technology.

The commanding officer (CO) of Archer-class submarine RSS Swords-

man, Lieutenant-Colonel Fong Chi Onn, said the ship he commands provides a "very complex and psychologically demanding" environment to work in. The passageways in the ship are less than a metre in width, and the total living space for the crew of 28 is less than that of a three-room Housing Board flat, he said.

"We don't have the luxury of picking up a handphone and calling back home to see how things are. We don't have the luxury of going on the Internet and checking on how things are back at home," added LTC Fong, who has been CO since December 2016.

To sharpen individual and team skills and endurance, the combat trainer allows the command team to practise working together to build up an accurate picture of the surrounding vessels.

This is done through listening to the noises made by the propellers of different vessels. Using sonar, surrounding ships can be identified and classified, such as whether they are a merchant ship, a warship or another submarine.

The steering and diving trainer allows practice of diving and manoeuvring procedures of the submarine.

Such training is especially important when the submarine needs to operate in shallow waters – typically up to a depth of 70m – around Singapore, with heavy maritime traffic.

Colonel Teo Chin Leong, CO of 171 Squadron, which consists of the navy's fleet of submarines, said RSS Swordsman performed "very well" in two key exercises last year – Exercise Bersama Lima in October and the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise in November. Exercise Bersama Lima involved naval, air and land forces from Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United Kingdom – members of the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

"In the Five Power Defence Arrangements exercise, our submarine could not be detected by other ships, and in the bilateral exercise with India, we successfully fired a torpedo in the Andaman Sea," he said.

mzlim@sph.com.sg

Chief trainer relates gruelling 'Perisher' course experience

While Senior Lieutenant-Colonel Loh Mun Heng is fond of whisky, he was determined not to receive a bottle of it during the six-month-long "Perisher" submarine command course he attended in 2007.

That is because trainees who fail the course – including those who choose to give up at any point – are given a customary farewell of a bottle of whisky to drown their sorrows on board the ferry back to shore, said SLTC Loh in an e-mail interview last Thursday.

"I was determined not to receive that farewell. It dawned upon me

that the submariner's competency and character are key to the submarine's mission success," he said.

SLTC Loh, 46, shared his experiences with Singapore media ahead of the launch of the Republic of Singapore Navy's (RSN) first newly built submarine, Type 218SG, officiated by Defence Minister Ng Eng Hen in the German city of Kiel today.

He was the second of two officers from the RSN who have been sent to the Royal Netherlands Navy Submarine Command Course so far, which trains submariners to become commanding officers.

Both passed the course, which is known for its high failure rate of more than 50 per cent. The RSN is the first Asian navy to have sent personnel that passed.

SLTC Loh said that throughout the course, he was stress-tested to his limits, especially mentally.

"But I persevered and overcame the difficulties because I knew I was carrying the reputation of our submarine force on my shoulders," said the former commanding officer of the Archer-class submarine RSS Swordsman from 2008 to 2016.



Senior Lieutenant-Colonel Loh Mun Heng has adapted aspects of his experience in the "Perisher" course to the Republic of Singapore Navy's training system. PHOTO: MINDEF

The final phase of the course was a month-long sea exercise on board the Dutch submarine Walrus, he said, where trainees were assessed on their tactical competencies in leading the ship to perform navigation and intelligence operations.

This was done in the presence of opposing forces such as frigates, helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft.

"We had to navigate the shallow waters safely around the Scottish island of Arran without GPS (Global Positioning System). In addition, we had to evade and remain undetected by the exercise opposition,

who were given an approximate time and area where the Walrus would be," he said.

SLTC Loh, as chief trainer of the Republic of Singapore Navy's submarine force, is responsible for the training system to ensure there are sufficient numbers of well-trained submariners.

He has adapted aspects of his experience in the "Perisher" course to the RSN's training system, with local qualification courses redesigned to teach things beyond technical skills, to develop skills such as mental agility, situational awareness and command presence.

"To me, the term 'Perisher' is more than a gruelling course. It is an attitude, a spirit, if you will."

Lim Min Zhang



Mrs Deepika Jindal has a store in the entrepreneur cluster at Oasis Terraces, selling eco-friendly products. With her at Green-on-Go are her husband Devendra Jindal, 42, and father-in-law J.P. Jindal, 70. ST PHOTO: JEREMY KWAN

Start-ups enjoy lower rents at new-generation neighbourhood centre

Joanna Seow

After two years of selling women's clothing online through their business Mini House, Mr Adrian Tan, 38, and his wife Tran Vu Yen Vy, 34, seized the chance to open a physical store when they secured a good deal on the rent.

They live next to new mall and neighbourhood centre Oasis Terraces in Punggol Drive, and their business is among 10 start-ups in the entrepreneur cluster on the third floor of the seven-storey building.

Mr Tan said they pay about \$765 a month as rent, which includes utilities. The rent is about a quarter of what they would have to pay at Waterway Point in Punggol Central, about a 20-minute walk away, he added.

Oasis Terraces, which officially opened yesterday, is the first new-generation neighbourhood centre developed by the Housing Board. Five more centres will be completed by 2022.

HDB, which is the landlord for the mall but has a managing agent to oversee the leasing, said the entrepreneurs enjoy lower costs and rents as the store spaces come with fittings such as flooring and lighting. It said the aim of the entrepreneur cluster is to add more variety to the mix of shops.

For Ms Vy, who runs Mini House with her friend, Ms Tran Thi Chan, 31, having a physical store provides customers with assurance that it is a legitimate business. "People can also come and see the products for themselves," she said. Previously,



Oasis Terraces, which officially opened yesterday, is the first new-generation neighbourhood centre developed by the Housing Board. HDB says the aim of the entrepreneur cluster on the third floor is to add more variety to the mix of shops. ST PHOTO: JOANNA SEOW

customers would place orders after watching their livestream on Facebook where they introduce their products.

Some of the mall tenants are also selling their products on Lazada, as

part of a tie-up between the e-commerce platform and the Housing Board. Among them is Green-on-Go owner Deepika Jindal, 35, who opened a store in the entrepreneur cluster in November last year, selling

eco-friendly products such as stainless steel straws.

The mother of two, who was a housewife before, said sales have been better than expected both online and in the physical store. "We

are trying to provide more affordable and stylish options," she said. "With the lower rent here, we can compete with online prices."

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Spotlight on injured workers not getting adequate leave

Rights groups, which see up to 70 such cases a year, cite pressure placed on doctors by firms

Calvin Yang

Badly injured workers are being deprived of time to rest and recuperate, with advocacy groups seeing up to 70 cases of inadequate medical leave every year.

Workers' rights groups told The Straits Times that many construction and shipyard firms put pressure on doctors to give workers only one or two days of sick leave or have them return to light duties to avoid having to report the accident.

The law requires companies to report incidents to the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) when workers are given more than three days of sick leave.

Keeping a clean safety record can help firms win contracts and avoid paying higher insurance premiums.

The issue came under the spotlight, not for the first time, after orthopaedic surgeon Kevin Yip Man Hing appealed last month against his conviction by a Singapore Medi-

cal Council (SMC) disciplinary tribunal for professional misconduct. Dr Yip did not give any sick leave to a construction worker after he had surgery for a broken collarbone, but certified him fit for "light duties" upon discharge.

The tribunal, which investigated the incident following a complaint by the Humanitarian Organisation for Migration Economics (Home), suspended him for five months last year. The worker had fallen from a height in July 2011, fracturing his collarbone and ribs, and injuring his wrist.

Hand surgeon Andrew Yam, who has treated injured workers for over a decade, said some big firms make deals with clinics to have all their workers treated there, on the understanding that they will not be given more than two days' medical leave.

Smaller companies may shuttle an injured worker from clinic to clinic and openly ask the treating doctor for the minimal number of days of sick leave, said Dr Yam. "If

this request is not acceded to, the employers take their worker to a more compliant doctor."

Research and advocacy manager for Home, Ms Stephanie Chok, said doctors and clinic staff have been observed taking instruction from the employers on whether to issue medical certificates (MCs), "either by calling them or when they are present with the worker at the clinic", she said. Some make injured workers sign forms declaring that they do not want medical leave, she said.

The clinics mentioned did not respond to queries.

MOM told The Straits Times it has referred four cases to the SMC since 2017 for investigation.

The SMC said in a reply that it has received such complaints, and there are ongoing disciplinary hearings on cases involving alleged inadequate MCs. It did not specify how many.

But many workplace incidents go unreported. Mr Ethan Guo, general manager of Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2), said: "Such a practice makes it hard for MOM to know about safety lapses at work-sites, and take corrective action."

MOM said it will take action against employers if it uncovers

LAPSES MAY GO UNDETECTED

Such a practice makes it hard for MOM to know about safety lapses at work-sites, and take corrective action.

”

MR ETHAN GUO, general manager of Transient Workers Count Too, on workplace incidents going unreported.

WORKERS NOT PRESSURED

We don't pressure anyone to not take MC. If a worker isn't well and comes back, he may end up injuring himself or others. Then it becomes a bigger problem when the company has to stop work for investigations to take place.

”

AN EMPLOYER

safety lapses or infringements, such as failure to report accidents. They can be fined, jailed or debarred from hiring foreign workers.

In a circular last September, MOM and the Ministry of Health reminded doctors to give injured workers medical leave "commensurate with the severity of the injury sustained". Doctors who prescribe light duties also need to ensure there are indeed suitable tasks available.

But this problem has persisted for more than a decade, said observers, pointing out that the situation did not improve after a similar circular was issued in 2013.

Only a handful of complaints are eventually filed with the SMC as the process is often laborious.

TWC2's Mr Guo said: "Almost always, a worker would have made his own way to a public hospital and gotten longer medical leave. Having solved the MC problem, it serves no further purpose for him to entangle himself in the bureaucratic process of lodging complaints with SMC."

Companies contacted denied having questionable medical arrangements, asserting that it is even more risky for them when workers return to work without recovering fully.

"We don't pressure anyone to not take MC," said one employer, who declined to be named. "If a worker isn't well and comes back, he may end up injuring himself or others. Then it becomes a bigger problem when the company has to stop work for investigations to take place."

Dr Gan Wee Hoe, director of Singapore General Hospital's Occupational and Environmental Medicine Unit, said injured workers who are not given enough recovery time risk aggravating injuries.

On the other hand, studies have shown that an early return to work can improve the outcomes for workers who are hurt, he noted. "Doctors need to be mindful that doing so will not pose a risk to the worker himself or his co-workers. The work may need to be adjusted so that it is within the functional capacity of the injured worker."

Rights groups help injured workers seek a second opinion from government hospitals and raise their cases with the relevant authorities.

Migrant Workers' Centre chairman Yeo Guat Kwang said his group has been engaging employers on the Work Injury Compensation Act, which allows workers to claim compensation for work-related injuries and occupational diseases.

Observers called for even more to be done to stop employers from gaming the system. Nee Soon GRC MP Louis Ng, who has filed a parliamentary question on the issue, said the biggest worry is that the under-reporting of cases would hamper improvements in safety. He wants to see a list of specified injuries – similar to what is done in Britain – that must be reported if they arise from a work-related accident.

Dr Yam recommended reporting all injuries, and having the level of permanent incapacity incurred rather than the number of days of medical leave as the criterion for leaving a mark on a company's safety record. That way, "employers will be incentivised to ensure that their workers get the best possible treatment, and to allow their workers as much time off as is needed for a good recovery", he added.

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Festive treat for community leaders – visit the Istana, meet the ministers



It was a picture of festive fun at the Istana Lawn yesterday as guests attended the Chinese New Year Garden Party, hosted by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his Cabinet. The party is held every year to thank grassroots and community leaders for their service, and about 4,000 guests attended this year's edition. Many enjoyed taking pictures on the grounds of the Istana (above), while some took the chance to take a selfie with the Prime Minister (left), and others checked out a shophouse-themed mosaic made up of Lego bricks (right). ST PHOTOS: GAVIN FOO



American illegally disclosed details of 13 people with HIV: S'pore prisons

Tee Zhuo

The American at the centre of a leak of HIV data illegally disclosed details of 13 HIV-positive people scheduled for a health check-up at Changi Prison Complex last year.

The Singapore Prison Service (SPS) has made a police report.

SPS said in a statement yesterday that Mikhy Farrera Brochez sent an e-mail on Saturday to some

government authorities and media organisations.

The e-mail contained photographs of a piece of paper with a list of NRIC or FIN numbers of 13 HIV-positive individuals, including himself. They were scheduled for a medical check-up on March 28 last year at Changi Prison Complex.

It is unclear if the 13 individuals were among the 14,200 whose data the Ministry of Health (MOH) last month said was leaked by Brochez.

"Brochez appears to have secured unauthorised possession of a copy of the list," said SPS, adding that the list was prepared by SPS' appointed medical provider Parkway Shenton.

"SPS is in the process of reaching out to the individuals on the list to inform them that their information has been disclosed illegally by Brochez," SPS said.

"We have worked with MOH to provide additional support to those

who require it."

Last month, MOH revealed that the confidential information of 14,200 people with HIV – including their names, contact details and medical information – had been stolen and leaked online.

Brochez's partner Ler Teck Siang was head of MOH's National Public Health Unit from March 2012 to May 2013 and had access to the HIV Registry for his work.

Ler has been charged under the

Official Secrets Act for failing to take reasonable care of confidential information regarding HIV-positive patients.

On Feb 13, Brochez claimed in a series of Facebook posts that he was abused while in police custody, sexually assaulted while in prison and contracted HIV only then. He also claimed that he was denied HIV medication while in jail and that the registry data was leaked by another person.

The Government denied the allegations.

Brochez's posts came a day after Health Minister Gan Kim Yong made a ministerial statement in Parliament. Mr Gan recounted how the data had fallen into Brochez's hands, the events leading up to him leaking the information and the steps the authorities have since taken to manage the leak.

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WORLD

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IMMEDIATE INCREASE IN CUSTOMS DUTY ON ALL PAKISTANI EXPORTS TO INDIA **A11**



Port Batu Ampar, a seaport in Batam that will be expanded as part of the island's infrastructure plans. An hour by ferry from Singapore, Batam is a free trade zone and home to hundreds of companies, including shipyards, factories producing electronics and those in the oil and gas sector. In recent years, it has faced stagnant growth and falling investments. ST PHOTOS: ARLINA ARSHAD



The two proposed special economic zones are at Hang Nadim International Airport and the upscale north-eastern Nongsa area. The enclaves will be dedicated to logistics and tourism, respectively.



the agency as its ex officio head after that.

Mr Edy said the restructuring of top management was a "political decision" by Jakarta, adding that his tasks in the interim included formulating regulations on licensing and producing a manual for officials on "how to operate Batam such that it will be a business entity, not a political entity".

Although the Batam mayor will have a dual role as BP Batam's head, he is expected only to "harmonise the implementation of policies", but decisions on matters related to trade and industry will still be the responsibility of the state agency, said Mr Edy in an attempt to allay fears that BP Batam may become politicised.

Mr Rudi, in a separate interview on Feb 8, promised that if he was appointed to lead the two bodies, he would synchronise administrative processes such as the issuance of business permits as well as land lease licences, ensure clear regulations for investors, and improve infrastructure. He said he would also see through the SEZ plans.

He also had assuring words for businesses over the restructuring process. "Investments should not be affected, whether Batam stays as an FTZ, becomes an SEZ or whether or not I will become BP Batam's ex officio head," he said.

SINGAPORE AS PARTNER, NOT RIVAL

Mr Edy said that as Batam looks towards SEZ status, he hopes to "optimise cooperation" with one of its main investors, Singapore, clarifying a Bloomberg report that the Indonesian island was repositioning itself to become a shipping rival.

Echoing this sentiment, Mr Rudi said: "Singapore is a country while we are only a city. Singapore is the parent and Batam is the child. We are partners, not competitors."

Mr Edy hopes that Singapore and other countries will use Batam as the main entry and exit point for goods into Indonesia as it works at expanding a seaport and building air cargo facilities.

Official data shows that Singapore accounted for 46.49 per cent of Batam exports and 30.46 per cent of its imports in 2017.

With the manufacturing sector picking up again, Batam will focus on producing pharmaceutical and medical devices, hence supporting Singapore's healthcare industry, Mr Edy said, adding that in the future, nursing homes could also be developed on the island.

Meanwhile, new investments worth US\$66 million (\$90 million) have flowed into the island, he said, adding that his priority was to give "business confidence, trust and certainty" to new investors.

Taiwanese electronics manufacturing company Pegatron Corporation reportedly has plans to build a manufacturing plant in Batam, while technology giant Apple hopes to open a new developer academy on the island.

Despite the bold moves by Jakarta, analysts still urged caution for investors.

Dr Siwage Dharma Negara, a senior fellow and co-coordinator of the Indonesia studies programme at ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, said BP Batam and the Batam city administration had "different vision and strategy".

BP Batam officials were usually selected from professionals with relevant experience and were politically neutral, while city administration officials, to some extent, were not free of political influence by their supporters, he said.

"I'm a bit worried that the city administration may not have a longer-term vision like BP Batam and that it cannot be objective," he said, adding that foreign investors should partner local companies as the latter may be able to read the situation better.

Dr Siwage also doubted that the SEZ status could be granted in June, with delays expected following the April election. Approval would more likely come after a new government has been formed, he said, adding that "in practice there is always a time lag in policy implementation in Indonesia".

He cautioned that if Mr Joko's challenger, retired army general Prabowo Subianto, won the election, the plans may be derailed.

"Prabowo may have different ideas, so it's possible the plans can be scrapped," he said.

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Batam planning two special economic zones

Bigger tax breaks, income tax relief in bid to tackle stagnant growth on Indonesian island

12

Number of SEZs that have been established across Indonesia, of which four - in North Sumatra, Banten, Central Sulawesi and Lombok - have begun commercial operations.

46.49%

Percentage of Batam exports that Singapore accounted for in 2017, according to official data.

30.46%

Percentage of Batam imports that Singapore accounted for in 2017.

\$90m

Value of new investments that have flowed into the Indonesian island.

Arlina Arshad
Regional Correspondent
In Batam

Indonesia's Batam island has proposed developing two special economic zones (SEZs), offering bigger tax breaks for businesses including those from Singapore and income tax relief for workers.

A senior official said the green light for both zones could come as early as June.

An hour by ferry from Singapore, Batam is a free trade zone (FTZ) and home to hundreds of companies, including shipyards, factories producing electronics and those in the oil and gas sector. In recent years, it has faced stagnant growth and falling investments.

Looking to turn things around, BP Batam, the state agency overseeing free trade on the island, has proposed that the central government in Jakarta grant enhanced SEZ status to two enclaves while retaining the island's FTZ status. Additional fiscal incentives related to trade and investments are provided for under an SEZ, while an FTZ offers only non-fiscal incentives to investors.

The two proposed enclaves are at Hang Nadim International Airport and the island's upscale north-eastern Nongsa area - which will be dedicated to logistics and tourism, respectively.

Nongsa boasts beach resorts and a multimillion-dollar technology



BP Batam's transitional chief Edy Putra Irawady (above) says the ministries will need three to six months to study the proposal. If President Joko Widodo is re-elected in the April polls, his "direct approval is expected to come in June".



PARTNERS, NOT RIVALS

Singapore is a country while we are only a city. Singapore is the parent and Batam is the child. We are partners, not competitors.



BATAM MAYOR MUHAMMAD RUDI (left), on a view that the Indonesian island is repositioning itself as a shipping rival.

park founded by Singapore-based media entertainment and creative services company, Infinite Studios.

BP Batam's transitional chief Edy Putra Irawady told The Straits

Times in an interview last Monday that the various ministries would need three to six months to study the proposal.

If President Joko Widodo is re-elected for a second term after the election in April, his "direct approval is expected to come in June", he added.

Mr Edy said the incentives provided for under an SEZ would include exemption from value-added taxes, removal from Indonesia's negative-investment list barring foreign investors from certain industries, and income-tax holidays.

Twelve SEZs have been established across Indonesia, of which four - in North Sumatra, Banten, Central Sulawesi and Lombok - have begun commercial operations.

Mr Edy described Nongsa as "a big value-add" to Indonesia, saying the information and communications technology-based companies in the area have a "global connection, supply their products all over the world and provide quality world-class expertise".

ENDING 'LEADERSHIP DUALISM'

Mr Joko caused a stir last December when he ordered that BP Batam be placed under the control of the Batam city administration in an effort to fix the problem of "leadership dualism" on the island.

BP Batam, established by a presidential decree in 1978 and which reports directly and is accountable to the central government in Jakarta, was put in charge of managing land for industry, issuing business licences and developing infrastructure. The city administration continued to hold sway over public services and administrative affairs.

The two seemingly competing bodies led to conflicting laws and regulations, creating a climate of uncertainty for investors, which in turn hampered growth.

Mr Edy, a former official under Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Darmin Nasution, was posted to Batam last month to replace Mr Lukita Dinarsyah Tuwo as BP Batam chief. But he has clarified that he remains a transitional head until April 30 and said that Batam Mayor Muhammad Rudi will helm

Trump briefed on 'very productive' China trade talks

Five days of discussions in Beijing see progress ahead of March 1 deadline set by Washington to reach a deal

PALM BEACH (Florida) • United States President Donald Trump received an update on trade talks with China at his Florida retreat after discussions in Beijing saw progress ahead of a March 1 deadline for reaching a deal.

"Trade negotiators have just returned from China where the meetings on Trade were very productive. Now at meetings with me at Mar-a-Lago giving the details," the President tweeted on Saturday.

Mr Trump, at his Mar-a-Lago club, was briefed in person by US

Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney and trade expert Peter Navarro, said White House spokesman Sarah Sanders.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, economic adviser Larry Kudlow and other aides joined by phone.

Both the US and China reported progress in five days of negotiations in Beijing last week but the White House said much work remains to be done to force changes

in Chinese trade behaviour.

At a White House press conference last Friday, Mr Trump said the talks with China were "very complicated" and that he might extend the March 1 deadline and keep tariffs on Chinese goods from rising.

US duties on US\$200 billion (\$\$271.3 billion) worth of Chinese imports are set to rise from 10 per cent to 25 per cent if no deal is reached by March 1 to address US demands that China curb forced technology transfers and better enforce intellectual property rights.

Chinese Vice-Premier and chief trade negotiator Liu He and Mr Lighthizer are to lead the next round of talks this week in Washington.

Meanwhile, China's top diplomat Yang Jiechi expressed hope that the US would implement, along with China, the consensus reached by the two countries' leaders on advancing bilateral ties based on coordination, cooperation and stability.

When answering questions about the China-US relationship after addressing the ongoing 55th Munich Security Conference on Saturday, he said the world is faced with both opportunities and challenges, and all countries need to cooperate with each other.

Mr Yang, a member of the apex Political Bureau of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, said the important consensus reached by the two leaders pointed to the direction for the development of bilateral ties in the coming period.

This year marks the 40th anniversary

of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Beijing and Washington.

Mr Yang urged the US to proceed from the fundamental interests of the people and earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the two leaders.

As for China-US economic and trade differences and frictions, he said Beijing is willing to solve them through cooperation, but with principles.

He said Chinese and US business teams recently conducted intensive consultations and made important progress, and hoped that both sides will continue to make concerted efforts to push for mutually beneficial and win-win agreements.

On the trade imbalance between China and the US, Mr Yang said the causes are complex, as a large part of this is due to US export controls towards China.

Commenting on Huawei, he said the Chinese telecommunications firm has made positive contributions to the development of communication technologies in countries including those in Europe, and that it strictly abides by international rules and local laws and regulations, in line with Chinese government requirements.

China has no law requiring companies to install "back doors" or collect foreign intelligence, he added.

Mr Yang said he hoped that countries will show some confidence in their own technologies and some respect for the willingness of other countries to develop cooperation



FRUITFUL MEETINGS

Trade negotiators have just returned from China where the meetings on Trade were very productive. Now at meetings with me at Mar-a-Lago giving the details.



US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP, in his tweet providing updates on the trade talks with China he received at his Florida retreat.

with Chinese enterprises.

Mr Yang also reiterated that China is firmly committed to the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and the maintenance of peace and stability in North-east Asia.

He said China supports the success of the second meeting between the leaders of the US and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, referring to North Korea by its official name, and expects positive results from it. REUTERS, XINHUA

The mane event: Dancing with ancestors' hair for Chinese New Year



Girls from the Long Horn Miao, a branch of the Miao ethnic minority group, taking part in the annual flower festival or "Tiaohuajie" in the village of Longjia in China's Guizhou province to celebrate Chinese New Year. The dozens of dancers stood out with their towering black headdresses – made from wool, string and the hair of their ancestors, and wrapped around animal horns with white fabric. The Miao ethnic minority is made up of some nine million people, found mostly in China's south-west. Of those, around 5,000 "Long Horn Miao" live in a dozen isolated villages in Guizhou. Their headpieces are passed down through generations and worn on a number of occasions to honour their ancestors and preserve their traditions. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

No plans for PPBM to work with PAS: Mahathir

PUCHONG • A collaboration between opposition Parti Islam Se-Malaysia (PAS) and Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM) is not on the cards, although the Islamist party's leaders have expressed confidence in Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's leadership.

Tun Dr Mahathir stressed yesterday they had not discussed the possibility of his party working together with PAS when its president Abdul Hadi Awang, secretary-general Takiyuddin Hassan and Terengganu Menteri Besar Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar met him recently.

"They only said they would not support Umno in this (Semenyih) by-election, because Umno was not fighting against DAP (Democratic Action Party)," he said. "But they did not say they would support the Pakatan Harapan candidate from PPBM."

Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi confirmed there was a meeting with Dr Mahathir last Friday, but merely said they discussed administrative matters, while Dr Mahathir said they discussed "politics".

The next day, Dr Mahathir claimed PAS had formally stated it would not support Umno in the March 2 Semenyih by-election.

"PAS has said they will not support Umno in the by-election. They confirmed this not only verbally, but in writing that was signed," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir clarified yesterday that he had only received a sample of the support letter endorsed by Mr Takiyuddin.

"I did not receive any letter signed by Hadi and (Ahmad) Samsuri. I only have one letter," he said, adding that PAS would eventually submit a written endorsement.

Dr Mahathir said they needed to reach an agreement to ensure both sides have representation in village committees, for example.

"In Kelantan and Terengganu, Pakatan Harapan does not have representatives in village committees," he said. "In states controlled by Pakatan, PAS wants representation in various bodies and local planning."

Dr Mahathir's clarifications on the status of the letter did not go down well with PAS, with Dr Samsuri – who is also PAS election strategist – saying the premier was using psychological warfare.

He said the letter Dr Mahathir was referring to was the one signed by the Islamist party in support of strengthening the Islamic, Malay and the people's agenda.

"PAS supports the PM in this agenda and it has nothing to do with the Semenyih by-election," said Dr Samsuri.

THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

UK finance minister forced to axe trip to China

LONDON • Britain's finance minister Philip Hammond has reportedly been forced to cancel a trip to China this week after British plans to send a new aircraft carrier to the Pacific angered Beijing.

Mr Hammond was set to visit China for trade talks with senior government figures but has axed the trip after Beijing reacted angrily last week to news of the warship's planned deployment, according to British media reports.

Although the visit was never formally announced by London, it had been under preparation for "many weeks", the Financial Times (FT) said.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced last Monday that the first operational mission of Britain's new £3.1 billion (\$\$5.4 billion) aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth would include the

Pacific region. In a strongly worded speech, he said adversaries were challenging "the rules-based international order" while noting that "China is developing its modern military capability and its commercial power".

The comments reportedly provoked anger in Beijing and consternation in British government departments eager to foster closer ties with the Asian economic power.

Mr Hammond had been expected to meet Chinese Vice-Premier Hu Chunhua but that was cancelled following Mr Williamson's speech, leading Britain to scrap the entire visit, the FT reported.

Meanwhile diplomatic sources told the BBC that China had made it clear "it is not going to happen for now".

Britain's finance ministry did not immediately respond to a request



for comment. But a spokesman told several media outlets on Saturday: "No trip was ever announced or confirmed."

China is highly sensitive about the South China Sea, which it claims as its exclusive territorial waters, and is mired in ongoing dis-

Mr Hammond's trip was cancelled after Beijing reacted angrily to news that Britain planned to send a warship to the Pacific region.

PHOTO: EPA-EFE

putes with its neighbours and the United States over access.

Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of the vast waters, and the US and its allies increasingly send planes and warships to the region for "freedom of navigation operations".

Last month, British and American warships conducted their first joint military exercises in the sea since Beijing began building bases and air strips on islands there.

In the deployment announcement, Mr Williamson said American F35s would be embedded alongside British planes on the carrier's air wing, "enhancing the reach and lethality of our forces".

The Chinese Embassy in London did not respond to a request for comment.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



A construction site for the Sittwe Waterfront Project, a joint venture between a South Korean firm and the Rakhine state government. The 36ha waterfront plot will be transformed into a new downtown area. Pre-sale exhibitions held in Sittwe and Yangon early last year generated bookings of 30 per cent of the land available, with over half the investors from within Rakhine state. ST PHOTOS: TAN HUI YEE

Troubled Rakhine state woos foreign investment

One of Myanmar's poorest states is set to hold its first investment fair this week

700,000

More than this number of Rohingya Muslim refugees are sheltering in neighbouring Bangladesh. Most of them were driven out of northern Rakhine in late 2017 during a brutal military crackdown against Rohingya insurgents.

127,987

Number of internally displaced people sheltering in 24 locations across Rakhine state as of Jan 31.

Tan Hui Yee
Indochina Bureau Chief
In Sittwe (Myanmar)

Backhoes flatten seaborne earth for an upcoming waterfront project in Sittwe, western Myanmar, as officials sharpen their pitch to investors to accelerate development in troubled Rakhine state.

Myanmar's second poorest state is gearing up for its first ever investment fair on Thursday. This will be held over three days in the tranquil surroundings of Ngapali beach, a resort area far from the violence that has displaced hundreds of thousands of residents from their homes.

"The conflict area is a very small area, but the rest of Rakhine is very peaceful," says Mr Htun Htun Naing, president of Myanmar Young Entrepreneurs Association, who is helping investors liaise with the Rakhine

state government. "You have to see it with your own eyes."

Recent events have kept Western investors and tourists away. None of the over 700,000 Rohingya Muslim refugees currently sheltering in neighbouring Bangladesh have been officially repatriated back to Rakhine state, due to concerns over their safety and well-being back home. Most of them were driven out of northern Rakhine in late 2017 during a brutal military crackdown against Rohingya insur-

gents that the United Nations has called ethnic cleansing.

Now, fierce fighting between the ethnic Rakhine Arakan Army and the Myanmar military has caused over 5,000 people to flee from their homes. Villagers say the authorities have restricted their access to food in the hope of denying supplies to the armed group. Nationalist sentiment has surged among the ethnic Rakhine, who form the biggest group in the state.

As of Jan 31, there were 127,987

internally displaced people sheltering in 24 locations across Rakhine state, UN data shows.

The slide in fortunes has been felt by business owners like Ms Yin Yin Mra, who has been running a beach-side restaurant in Sittwe, Rakhine's capital, for the past four years.

"When I started this restaurant, many foreigners came," she told The Straits Times. "But this year, there have been very few."

Yet there are bright spots. In Sittwe, a South Korean-Myan-

mar project to turn a 36ha waterfront plot into a new downtown area is taking shape. Private company BXT International, in a joint venture with the Rakhine state government, has reclaimed land by the coast which will be turned into homes and shops.

Pre-sale exhibitions held in Sittwe and Yangon early last year generated bookings of 30 per cent of the land available, with over half the investors from within Rakhine state.

According to Mr Nay Min Thu, the managing director of Myanmar-House.com which is marketing this project, companies and individuals who booked the plots were planning to set up restaurants, hotels, banks, convenience stores and other businesses. "Right now, the reclamation has been completed, and we are building roads, drainage and electricity poles," he told The Straits Times. "We are targeting completion of the entire project by the end of this year."

Farther down the coast and also in Sittwe lies a new India-financed port that was built to better connect and promote trade routes between Myanmar and India's north-east.

About 500km away, in the southern Rakhine township of Kyaukphyu, a China-backed deep-sea port and special economic zone will be built in the years to come, to complement an oil facility that allows Middle Eastern petrol to be unloaded and pumped via pipelines to China.

Mr Kyaw Aye Thein, Rakhine state's minister for finance, tax, planning and economy, welcomes the subtle geopolitical rivalry between India and China playing out in Rakhine state.

"It creates job opportunities," he told The Straits Times recently. "If the seaport and roads are good, agriculture products from northern Rakhine can be exported to other places, and the region can develop."

But the Rakhine state government is also looking beyond these two regional powers. It has roped in Japan's aid agency to help organise the upcoming fair, eager to play up assets like its long coastline, fresh seafood products and heritage sites like Mrauk U.

Meanwhile, more investment-friendly regulations introduced last August give investors in less-developed regions like Rakhine state seven-year tax breaks. Unlike in the past, the state and regional authorities are also now empowered to approve investments worth up to US\$5 million (\$6.8 million).

According to the Myanmar Times, 17 foreign companies have invested up to US\$9 billion in Rakhine state's hospitality, tourism, livestock, fishery, and oil and gas sectors.

Human rights group Fortify Rights urges caution, warning that, for example, because of severe restrictions on mobility placed on Rohingya within Rakhine state, "potential investors would be at risk of complicity in upholding an apartheid situation".

"A rush to generate foreign investment raises concerns. All communities in the state, from all ethnicities and faiths, need and deserve a stronger economy, but there aren't market-based solutions to many of the human rights problems in Rakhine," Fortify Rights chief executive officer Matthew Smith told The Straits Times. "The idea that lifting incomes will address the human rights problems is shallow."

During the upcoming investment fair, the Rakhine state government is expected to sign memorandums of understanding with some foreign companies dealing with solar power, agricultural products and food processing.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency, meanwhile, says it is working with the Rakhine government to support Myanmar's bid "to alleviate poverty and promote balanced economic development".

It told The Straits Times: "We hope this kind of a fair would provide an opportunity for investors to see the actual situation and help them to make investment decisions in a more objective way, and contribute to facilitating the development and stability of Rakhine state through investment."

tanhy@sph.com.sg



Left: At this facility on Made Island, Kyaukphyu, Rakhine state, oil tankers unload their shipments, which are pumped across pipelines that cross upper Myanmar into China.



Below: The area on Made Island in Kyaukphyu, where a new China-backed deep-sea port and special economic zone will be built in the years to come, to complement an oil facility that allows Middle Eastern petrol to be unloaded and pumped via pipelines to China.



From left: A single-carriage train travelling slowly along tracks in Rakhine state; the streets of downtown Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine; and the commuter harbour in Kyaukphyu, in Rakhine. Human rights group Fortify Rights urges caution over the rush to generate foreign investment, warning that, for example, because of severe restrictions on mobility placed on Rohingya within Rakhine state, "potential investors would be at risk of complicity in upholding an apartheid situation".



From left: A single-carriage train travelling slowly along tracks in Rakhine state; the streets of downtown Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine; and the commuter harbour in Kyaukphyu, in Rakhine. Human rights group Fortify Rights urges caution over the rush to generate foreign investment, warning that, for example, because of severe restrictions on mobility placed on Rohingya within Rakhine state, "potential investors would be at risk of complicity in upholding an apartheid situation".

Feeling blue? Not these record-breaking smurf fans



Participants dressed as smurfs posing in Lauchringen, Germany on Saturday, during an attempt to hold the world's largest meeting of smurfs in a bid to outdo a previous record. Fans of the blue elf-like creatures, created in a Belgian comic strip in the 1950s, managed to gather 2,762 people dressed and painted blue in the regulation smurf attire – curly hats and all. Their record comes three years after their first attempt failed to beat the record held by Welsh students, who managed to unite 2,510 regulation smurfs in Swansea back in 2009. PHOTO: REUTERS

WorldBriefs

Trump's pick for UN envoy withdraws

WASHINGTON • US President Donald Trump's choice for ambassador to the United Nations, Ms Heather Nauert, has withdrawn from consideration for the job for family reasons, the State Department said.

Ms Nauert, who was the State Department spokesman when Mr Trump chose her for the UN post, had worked as a host for the conservative-leaning Fox News Channel.

"The past two months have been gruelling for my family and therefore it is in the best interest of my family that I withdraw my name from consideration," Ms Nauert said in a State Department statement on Saturday. REUTERS

Nobel: 'US asked Abe to nominate Trump'

TOKYO • Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe nominated US President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize last autumn after receiving a request from the US government to do so, the Asahi newspaper reported yesterday.

The report follows Mr Trump's claim on Friday that Mr Abe had nominated him for the Nobel prize for opening talks and easing tensions with North Korea.

The US government had sounded Mr Abe out over the Nobel nomination after Mr Trump's summit in Singapore in June last year with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, the Asahi said, citing an unnamed Japanese government source. REUTERS

Mobilising for US aid in Venezuela

CARACAS • Thousands of volunteers in Venezuela were set to begin mobilising yesterday to bring American aid into their crisis-hit country despite a blockade by President Nicolas Maduro, who claims the assistance could be cover for a US invasion.

Once-wealthy Venezuela is gripped by a power struggle between socialist leader Maduro and Mr Juan Guaido, head of the National Assembly who proclaimed himself interim president last month and now has the backing of more than 50 countries. AGENCY FRANCE-PRESSE

Iran minister accuses US, Israel of war-mongering

Foreign Minister Zarif criticises Europe for not calling out duo for behaviour in Mid-East

MUNICH • Iran's foreign minister yesterday accused Israel of looking for war and warned that its actions and those of the United States were increasing the chances of a clash in the Middle East.

Addressing the Munich Security Conference, Mr Mohammad Javad Zarif also criticised the US administration after Vice-President Mike Pence last week called on European powers to pull out of the nuclear deal with Iran.

Mr Zarif urged France, Germany and Britain to do more to save that accord.

"Certainly, some people are looking for war... Israel," Mr Zarif said. "The risk (of war) is great. The risk will be even greater if you continue to turn a blind eye to severe violations of international law."

Accusing Israel of violating international law after bombing campaigns in Syria, Mr Zarif criticised European powers for not calling out Israel and the US for their behav-

our in the region.

"Israeli behaviour is putting international law on the shelf, US behaviour is putting international law on the shelf," he said.

Speaking to his Cabinet yesterday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Iranian belligerence was the main destabilising factor in the entire Middle East.

"We must deny Iran nuclear weaponry and block its military entrenchment in Syria. We will continue taking constant action to ensure Israel's security," he said in remarks broadcast on Israeli media.

Vice-President Pence on Friday accused Iran of Nazi-like anti-Semitism, maintaining his harsh rhetoric against Teheran just a day after he attacked European powers for trying to undermine US sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Mr Zarif said the US had an "unhealthy" and "pathological obsession" with Iran and accused Mr Pence of trying to bully his allies.

"All in the name of containing Iran, the US claims, and some blindly parrot, that it is Iran that is interfering in the region, but has it been asked whose region?"



Mr Mohammad Javad Zarif urged France, Germany and Britain to do more to save the nuclear accord.

He added: "Look at the map, the US military has travelled 10,000km to dot all our borders with its bases. There is a joke that it is Iran that put itself in the middle of US bases."

Mr Zarif, who said Iran was committed to the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers for now, also accused France, Britain and Germany of not doing enough to ensure Teheran received the economic benefits of that accord.

These three countries this month set up the Instrument In Support Of Trade Exchanges (Instex), a new channel for non-greenback trade with Iran to avoid American sanctions. However, diplomats say it is unlikely to allow the big transactions that Teheran says it needs to keep a nuclear deal afloat after last year's decision by US President Donald Trump to abandon the nu-

clear accord.

"Instex falls short of commitments by the E3 (France, Germany, Britain) to save the nuclear deal," Mr Zarif said. "Europe needs to be willing to get wet if it wants to swim against the dangerous tide of US unilateralism."

Mr Zarif also said Iran is investigating reports of a US programme to sabotage its missiles and rockets.

The New York Times reported last Wednesday that the Trump administration has accelerated a secret initiative to slip faulty parts and materials into the supply chain of the Iranian aerospace industry. The newspaper said two Iranian attempts to launch satellites have failed in the past month, part of a pattern going back more than a decade.

Separately, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani yesterday inaugurated a new domestically built submarine armed with cruise missiles, Press TV reported.

"It weighs 600 tonnes and enjoys state-of-the-art weaponry, including torpedoes, naval mines and cruise missiles that could be launched from a submerged position," it said.

REUTERS, BLOOMBERG

Catholic bishops to hold summit on child sex abuse

VATICAN CITY • Pope Francis gathers bishops from around the world at the Vatican this week for a hotly awaited summit on tackling the wave of child sex abuse scandals assailing the Catholic Church.

The heads of around 100 bishops' conferences from every continent will convene from Thursday to Sunday for the meeting, with victims' groups demanding that a concrete action plan on fighting paedophilia be drawn up.

The Pope, who asked the bishops to speak to victims of abuse in their respective countries before the Rome convention, has tried to dial down "inflated expectations" for a cure-all.

The conference aims to be an opportunity to improve awareness of the global phenomenon of sexual abuse of minors within the Church, despite many in Africa, Asia and the Middle East being in denial of what they call "a Western problem".

In many parts of the world, discussing violence towards children and even sex is taboo, leading the Vatican to organise this week's "educational" gathering.

Some victims of abuse, particularly from countries where their plight is ignored, have also been invited to attend.

Said German Jesuit priest Hans Zollner, a psychologist who travels the world educating priests and is one of the conference's organisers: "Someone who has met a victim, heard their cries for help, their tears, their psychological and physical wounds, can't remain the same."

"The Catholic Church has been faced with this problem for the last 35 years," he said, hailing rigorous preventative measures taken in Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland and the United States.

"It works: The number of new accusations of sexual assault in all



Pope Francis has warned those hoping the summit will be a panacea for the issue that "the problem of abuse will continue".

these countries is now minimal," he said.

Father Federico Lombardi, who will be leading debates during the conference, said the aim is for the heads of the world's episcopal conferences to achieve "a feeling of collective responsibility".

"The credibility of the Church is at stake," he said.

The summit comes after Pope Francis defrocked a former cardinal – American Theodore McCarrick – over accusations he sexually abused a teenager 50 years ago.

The 88-year-old, who resigned from the Vatican's College of Cardi-

nals last July, is the first cardinal ever to be defrocked for sex abuse.

Chilean Vatican expert Luis Badilla said the meeting would be a "decisive moment for the pontificate".

"We want this meeting to result in concrete measures," he said, echoing victims' hopes for the conference, being held in the wake of paedophile scandals that have shaken the Church, particularly in Chile and in the US.

The summit's title, concerning "the protection of minors", avoids using the words "sex" or "paedophilia", noted Mr Badilla. That reflects the Church's centuries-old instinct to protect its image, he said.

But, he added, "the only way to emerge from the crisis is to tell the whole truth".

The Pope has already warned those hoping the four-day meet will be a panacea for the issue that "the problem of abuse will continue".

Father Zollner is also wary of people hoping for a magic wand of "new norms" that will make the problem simply disappear.

Bishops must "change their attitude", which can be more difficult than drawing up new rules or guidelines, he said.

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The Straits Times says

A significant step up for caregivers

Over the years, calls for greater support for caregivers have cropped up periodically, including in Parliament. It is heartening to see that such calls have not fallen on deaf ears. Last week, the Government added a vital piece to the fabric of support, with a new Caregiver Support Action Plan. Measures include a new grant to offset care costs, more options for respite care, and allowing people to use Medisave to help pay for siblings' care, MPs heard in Parliament last week.

The range of caregiver support has been expanding over the years. Grants help caregivers attend training courses. Respite services are available. A network of caregiver support is being built up. Today, government subsidies are available for

home-based nursing and medical services to augment family caregiving. Among the new measures, the caregiving grant is noteworthy for representing a small but significant shift in thinking.

In 2007, MP Lam Pin Min, who is now Senior Minister of State for Health and Transport, called for a caregiver allowance in Parliament. He cited the case of a middle-aged woman who gave up her job to care for an elderly parent. Among the points he made: Supporting such decisions enables the frail elderly to be cared for at home and relieves pressure on limited places in nursing homes and eldercare centres; also, countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden provide a caregiving allowance. Over the years, various MPs have repeated the call. Mr Christopher de Souza did so in 2015, but was turned down with a similar argument as was made in 2007 – namely that introducing a direct caregiver allowance may inadvertently monetise family support and filial piety, which are priceless. Still, Health Minister Gan Kim Yong did promise to continue to study new ways to beef up support for caregivers.

The ministry has kept its promise by putting caregivers high on its agenda over the past year. The new Home Caregiving Grant of \$200 will be means-tested and introduced by the end of this year, available for anyone with permanent moderate disabilities, regardless of age. It replaces the

existing \$120 Foreign Domestic Worker Grant. The new caregiving grant is a well-thought out and apt response to a growing need. It is not positioned as an allowance for the caregiver, thus avoiding any suggestion of monetising family ties. As a grant to offset expenses, it recognises the practical costs of caregiving. It is fungible, and can be used for anything from eldercare centre fees to transport to medical appointments. It is more equitable than the previous grant which benefited only those who hire domestic maids. The conceptual framework is in place for financial support for caregivers. This can be expanded in the future, as the need arises, if the country's Budget permits.

GlobalAffairs

The fury behind Europe's populist tsunami

The populist backlash is not just a far-right phenomenon. Old established political parties are being buffeted by both the far left and far right amid a failure to address deep economic and social grievances.



Jonathan Eyal
Global Affairs Correspondent

Spain has decided to hold fresh general election in April, a full year earlier than required by the country's Constitution. So far, hardly remarkable; early national ballots – either because a sitting government has lost its majority or because a sitting government is hoping to get a bigger majority – are the bread and butter of politics.

But far from being dismissed as just a routine exercise, Spain's decision to go for early ballots was met with alarm. For the fear is that Spain's election will result in the rise of yet another anti-establishment party in Europe, thereby consolidating the apparently unstoppable seizure of the continent by populist forces determined to tear up Europe's established political order, halt free trade and reverse decades of social and political integration.

Unquestionably, the danger should never be dismissed as pure fantasy. After all, this is the continent which unleashed two world wars, largely because it failed to control its militaristic and racist passions or its totalitarian movements.

Still, the debate about the rise of populism in Europe – and for that matter in the United States and in

Latin America as well – remains far too imprecise and confused. And, as a result, it not only makes the populist challenge appear much bigger than perhaps it really is, but it also risks misdiagnosing its causes and thereby failing to identify a proper response.

The fact that Europe's political landscape is changing in ways few imagined is beyond doubt.

A mere decade ago, the idea that a nationalist, far-right and anti-immigrant movement could gain any parliamentary seats in Germany would have been dismissed as a bad joke. Today, the Alternative for Germany is the third-largest party in the German Parliament, and the main opposition.

In France, there is no question that the only serious electoral alternative to President Emmanuel Macron is Ms Marine Le Pen, the leader of the National Rally, another far-right movement virulently opposed to both immigration and the forces of globalisation.

Meanwhile, movements of various populist stripes control governments in Italy, Poland and Hungary, and either share power or play the role of key opposition in Finland, Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands.

Needless to say, it was the populist sentiment fanned by the United Kingdom Independence Party which unleashed a series of events resulting in Britain's decision to leave the European Union, arguably the single most destructive blow to European integration since World War II.

Add to this the election of President Donald Trump in the US

and the recent election of President Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil – a man who revels in his description as Latin America's answer to The Donald – and the political tsunami is evident.

DEFINING THE TIDAL WAVE

So is the feeling of despondency among established politicians and intellectuals, who increasingly bemoan the end of the world they knew, and prophesy a return to the Dark Ages.

Yet much of this doom-laden discussion is both incoherent and deeply unhelpful. For it tells us little about what is really happening, and even less about what can be done to confront the trend.

To start with, there is no agreement over how populism should be defined, and who should be regarded as belonging to this tidal wave.

Most academics, journalists and media commentators tend to lump together as populists all those who reject globalisation, champion the nation state over multinational institutions and claim to represent the “true people” by opposing immigration and multicultural societies.

But such an approach identifies only those on the far right of the political spectrum, while ignoring those on the far left. And there are plenty of those too.

Just think of Greece, run by coalition of Syriza, a far-left movement which initially wanted to nationalise all banks and means of production and force the EU to hand over money so that the Greeks could continue spending whatever they wished. The fact that it was prevented from such follies does not alter the reality that it is an

anti-establishment populist movement.

And what about Portugal's Communists and Left Bloc, who are equally on the far left, equally disdainful of everything the establishment stands for yet are propping up that country's government?

Examples abound elsewhere in Europe. Mr Jean-Luc Melenchon, leader of La France Insoumise (Untamed France), attracted one in five voters in France's last presidential election and frequently justifies demonstrators using violence against the French state.

And while Belgium is home to significant far-right anti-immigrant movements, the rising new party there is a far-left movement called Party of Labour.

Today's new far-right movements identify ethnic minorities as their mortal enemies, while the far left fingers an entire economic class as its implacable foe. But, if taken to their logical conclusions, both approaches result in the same thing: demands for new, officially-sanctioned discrimination, the claim that the end justifies the means however horrible the means may be, closed borders and the reversal of globalisation.

Understanding the full breath of the populist backlash by accepting that it is both a far-left and far-right phenomenon is an essential step in trying to explain its enduring appeal.

It is, of course, no coincidence that the wave of populist nationalism washing over the West began in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis, when millions lost

their jobs and savings and the entire promise of prosperity which underpinned the globalised market economies appeared discredited.

But if economics is the only reason, then how can one explain the rapid rise of the Alternative for Germany in the one European country which continued to boom during the latest economic crisis, or the fact that a far-right party is in charge of Poland, the economic powerhouse of the former communist eastern Europe?

Trying to solve this contradiction, some analysts argue that populism is not the outcome of economic marginalisation, but the result of a culture clash between a globalised elite promoting liberal values such as migration and gender identity matters and the more traditional, conservative values of the population.

This is the clash between the cosmopolitan “anywhere” and local “somewhere”, as Mr David Goodhart, one of Britain's top political writers, put it.

Professors Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin, two Harvard political scientists, claim to have confirmed Mr Goodhart's analysis in a recent book appropriately entitled *The Cultural Backlash*.

But that too is only part of the story. For it is wrong to see the current political backlash as just a morality play between God-fearing electorates and godless elites.

Many Europeans supporting anti-immigrant parties like nothing better than to spend their holidays overseas among other cultures, and cannot be branded as just racists or “anti-foreigner”. And many of those taking to the streets in demonstrations – people such as

the so-called Yellow Vests in France – are not poverty-stricken, but still suffer genuine economic hardship and genuine social exclusion which goes beyond a clash of values.

The only interim conclusion which can be reached with some certainty is that the populist movement now buffeting the Western world is both economic and social in origin, upending both the left and the right of the political spectrum, and affecting all the old established political parties.

The traditional political left in Europe is worst-hit because it has found no alternative to old socialist ideals which no longer look either workable or relevant, while the political right found it easier to adapt to newly revived concepts of nationalism.

WHAT'S TO BE DONE

Still, the pressure is on all established parties: France's old parties have melted away, Britain's historic parties look set to go in the same direction, and Germany's two main parties now command the support of barely half of voters.

What can be done?

First, stop patronising electorates. Don't dismiss those voting for populist movements as “the great unwashed” as some British elite commentators would put it, or as the “basket of deplorables” as Mrs Hillary Clinton quipped during her disastrous US presidential electoral campaign.

European politicians will also have to accept that the old days of blind and lifetime loyalty to one party are over. Mass parties can no longer rely on “natural constituencies” and will have to recreate their supporters' base for every electoral cycle; new technologies and patterns of human interaction have made this inevitable. Those parties which learn how to do it will survive, those who don't, won't.

But that does not mean that the current populist wave is invincible. Vox, Spain's latest populist movement, may do well in the forthcoming general election, but probably less well than currently feared.

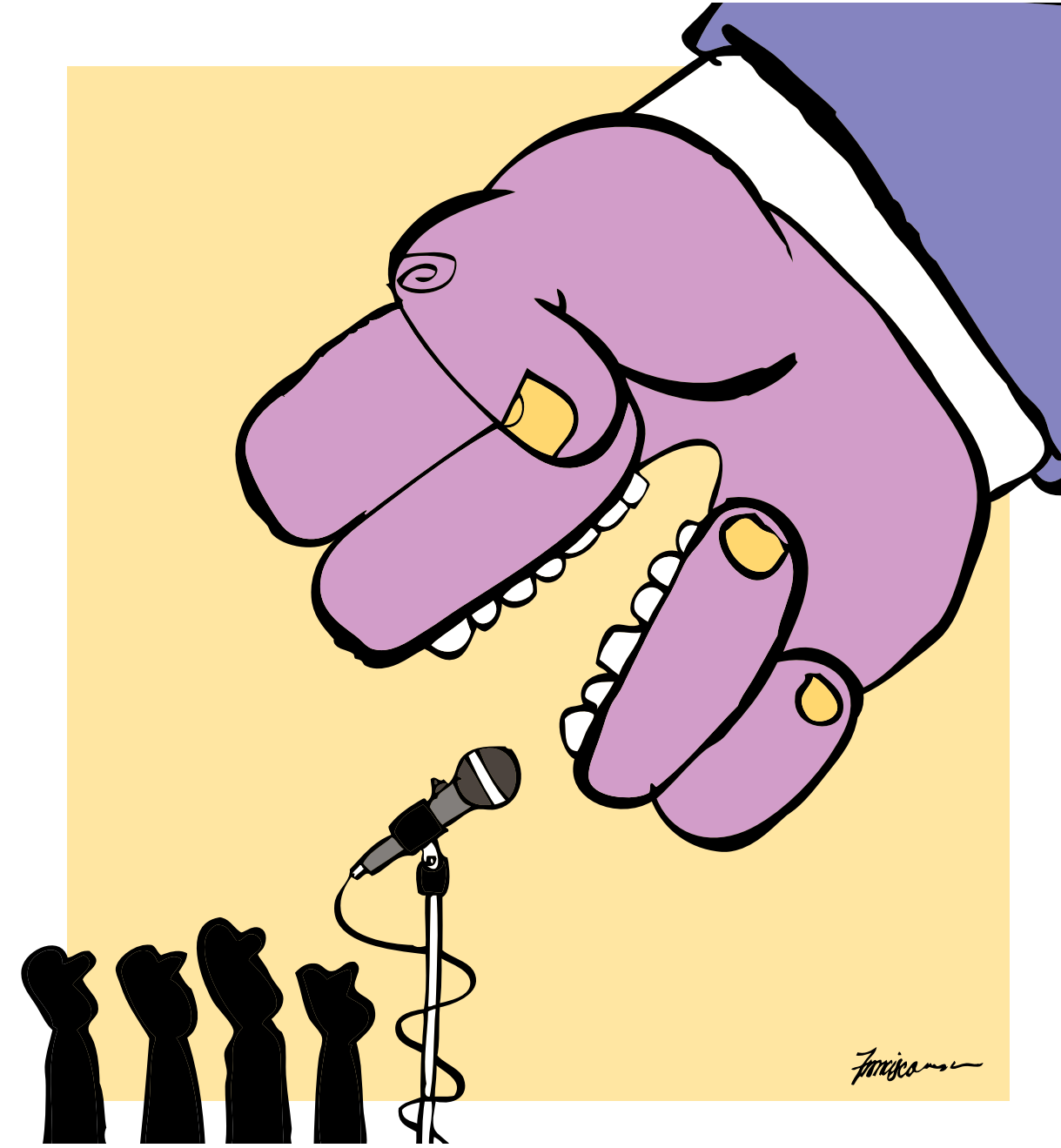
Yet even if Vox joins a future governing coalition in Spain, it will discover – like its counterparts in Greece or Italy have already done – that once called to power, the new “political kids” often prove no better at governing than the old political class.

Nor is it obvious that a large number of populists who look certain to be elected to the European Parliament when the continent-wide elections take place in May will make any difference, for the populists of both the far-left and far-right variety are not good at international cooperation, which is precisely what is required to have any impact in the European Parliament.

In short, this is still not Europe of the 1930s, a continent prime for a collapse into the hands of fascism and communism.

The continent's political class may be beleaguered but it is not discredited. Europe's political institutions remain strong.

And – perhaps precisely because Britain now shows the sad effect of populism – support for the European Union has never been higher in the rest of the continent.



Rail reliability: Who pays and when?



Christopher Tan

Senior Transport Correspondent

Transport Minister Khaw Boon Wan told Parliament last week that bringing Singapore's rail network back to reliability has taken a financial toll on operators.

The revelation raises questions about the long-term sustainability of the rail system, and what Singapore can do to ensure both commuters and taxpayers share the burden of ensuring that sustainability equitably.

The first financial model – where the state pays for the infrastructure and the first set of operating assets, and the operator bears costs associated with running the lines and replacement assets – worked well enough initially.

In fact, so well that SMRT, the dominant rail player, was able to pay generous dividends to shareholders. In 2001, a year after it was listed, SMRT paid main shareholder Temasek Holdings a special dividend of \$540 million. By 2016, it had paid out a further \$1.2 billion or so in dividends to shareholders.

Clearly, not enough had been spent on keeping assets in good running order, even if this was not entirely through SMRT's own fault.

In his latest address to the House on Wednesday, Mr Khaw drew a parallel between the human body and the rail system, saying: "If you neglect the trains, neglect your body, you suffer for it."

"When the trains are young, or when your body is young, it doesn't really matter, because you wouldn't see the results of the negligence. But for old trains, it will show up."

And that was exactly what happened. In 2011, two massive breakdowns hit the oldest North-South Line, followed by a string of major breakdowns and innumerable minor glitches proliferating across the network over the next several years.

The rail system is actually an extremely robust system. But it has to have regular maintenance, repairs and replacement. Otherwise, things will start falling apart. And once they start doing that, putting things right will be a monumental task – partly because rectification has to be carried out while the lines are running.

After six years and hundreds of millions spent, works to replace rail sleepers, power rail and signalling



We should also ask ourselves if such a small country like Singapore needs to have more than one rail operator, says the writer. Having just one operator allows for economy of scale, which can translate to millions in savings over time. Even Hong Kong, which is a larger jurisdiction, relies on one rail operator. ST PHOTO: JASMINE CHOONG

system were completed last year on the North-South, East-West lines.

And rail reliability has improved significantly. Compared with 2017, the engineering measure of mean kilometres before failure more than trebled to 690,000km last year.

But, as Mr Khaw told Parliament, "we are not out of the woods".

There are three more major asset replacement projects to go – stretching up to 2024 – before the two oldest lines, which carry the bulk of riders, can cope comfortably with increased passenger load.

This, as well as rejuvenation works for other lines, will involve more spending – according to the Transport Minister, another \$4.5 billion over the next five years.

If we had stayed with the previous rail financing framework, operators would have had to pick up that tab. Or most of it. But with the new rail financing framework, the Government – or taxpayers – will now have to share the bill.

In that sense, one could say that operators had already been given a free pass. They no longer have to set aside reserves for huge capital

expenditures to purchase replacement rolling stock and such.

If they are still in a financial bind after this, should taxpayers or commuters bail them out further? It would be most inequitable. After all, they had entered the business, or bid for operating licences, with their eyes wide open.

Unless we are saying that they had been given grossly inaccurate ridership forecasts. But even so, that is business risk. No forecast is ever fully accurate.

Of course, we cannot adopt such a hard stance when it comes to the rail network, which has become central to the well-being of more than half the population.

But to avoid past missteps and possibly future bail-outs, we need to explore new ways to ensure sustainability, assuming the current financial framework is still inadequate.

MERITS OF HONG KONG MODEL

One possibility would be to adopt Hong Kong's rail-and-property model. Operator MTR Corp develops land above its stations and

depots. That has afforded Hong Kong a system which is reliable, extremely well connected, and with fares which are affordable.

Property returns allow MTR to pay for asset renewals, without unduly burdening commuters or taxpayers.

In Singapore, returns from government land sales – whether along MRT lines or not – are largely locked up in reserves.

If ensuring the sustainability of our rail network is a national priority, we should perhaps look at how we can set aside a portion of land sale proceeds for rail renewal. Because a reliable rail system benefits not just the present generation, but many generations to come.

Access to rental income derived from station space is another way to help subsidise rail operations. Indeed, rental income has served SMRT well.

But it seems the Government is now looking at separating rental operations from rail operations. In the upcoming Thomson-East Coast Line, a separate tender is called for non-fare businesses. Is there a real

need for such a change?

TOO MANY OPERATORS?

We should also ask ourselves if such a small country like Singapore needs to have more than one rail operator. Doing so dilutes scarce engineering expertise, leads to wasteful duplication and affects service. One real example is when there is a technical glitch affecting one line, commuters on a line run by another operator may not be informed via train announcements.

Having just one operator also allows for economy of scale, which can translate to millions in savings over time. Even Hong Kong, which is a larger jurisdiction, relies on one rail operator.

Informed people such as former senior civil servant Ngiam Tong Dow, former Public Transport Council chairman Gerard Ee and even ComfortDelGro chairman Lim Jit Poh have mooted for one company to run buses, and another to run trains to avoid duplication of resources.

A well-regulated monopoly can serve commuters better.

The current administration, however, wants contestability. It is a sound notion, but one which is perhaps best applied to bigger markets. In smaller markets, it can lead to wastage, and eventually higher costs. We are already seeing signs of this emerging from the bus contracting model.

According to Land Transport Authority financials, deficits before grants arising from bus contracting doubled from \$424 million in 2017 to \$864 million last year. And that's just the start of bus contracting.

Of course, a service level which is commensurate with higher cost is tolerable. Even the most critical commuter will agree that public transport quality standards have improved with the billions spent to beef up bus fleets and rejuvenate rail lines.

The question is, can the equation between expenditure and outcome be better rationalised, so as to achieve a balance which does not impose too huge a burden on any one generation?

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Malaysia's season of discontent

A political year will soon be up, so the honeymoon's truly over. How has Malaysia's new government fared? With indiscretions rolling out, that's coffee shop talk right now.

Wong Chun Wai

Datuk Kadir Jasin is no ordinary journalist.

He's not just a highly respected veteran newsmen with many accolades, but special adviser to the Prime Minister, too. He is also a supreme council member of Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia.

So he is close to the powers that be. And some would say, Datuk Kadir has always been frank, but last week, he went a notch further. He was brutal.

There were "implicit and explicit" reasons behind Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad forming the Economic Action Council (EAC), he said. "The explicit reason is Dr Mahathir needs a special body to scrutinise and decide on matters related to pertinent and urgent

issues about the economy, finance and welfare of the people. The implicit reason is that the PM is directly admitting that the current machinery, especially the Cabinet, is not enough to handle the issues mentioned.

"We don't need to pretend merely to protect the feelings of anyone or any party. The reality is that after eight months governing the country, the Pakatan Harapan (PH) administration has not produced any tangible result for the public to feel it," he wrote.

He added that there was no need "to beat around the bush" as many Malaysians were becoming disappointed with the government's performance, and that of its Cabinet ministers and civil servants.

"I know many people know that the PM himself is not too happy or satisfied with the performance of the Cabinet ministers. It can be said that every time he meets the people and reporters, he is constantly asked about the competency of the ministers, ministers who rarely go to the ground, those who often take selfies with their officers, ministers who are hard to meet or those who aren't truthful about their personal matters," he added.

I disagree with his assessment that the EAC was set up because the Cabinet hasn't been able to cope with those issues. Like the previous National Economic Action Council, this body has included respected economists and key influencers of the private sector.

It may lack members from the private sector, especially entrepreneurs, and the younger set, but this EAC is a good one that's perhaps long overdue, especially with the coming two years looking turbulent. No one, not even the Prime Minister, has given a clear

direction to the country how we intend to sail through these rough seas, and these uncertainties have also generated much concern in business circles.

But Datuk Kadir is right. There is a strong sentiment that some ministers are not performing, or plainly put, are unable to manage their jobs. It's now clear how some of them don't fit their portfolios, not because they aren't clever or are incapable, but perhaps it isn't aligned with their abilities, interests, social skills or even personalities. It's a mismatch, and as the first anniversary of the PH government in May approaches, the perception is that the first PH Cabinet was hastily cobbled together with insufficient thought, the effects of which can now be seen.

A couple of ministers are still in opposition mode and out to settle old scores, remaining shackled to the past. Names have also been banded in Putrajaya of ministers who brushed aside the senior government officers in their ministries, and in some instances, allegedly doing so through racial prejudice and bias.

Datuk Kadir, as an adviser, has obviously informed Dr Mahathir of the ground-level grumbling and its steady increase in volume.

There are two layers of resentment – first, the powerful political and business elites, a lot who think that not enough has been done. Yes, reforms to the various institutions, crackdowns on corruption and wider involvement of Malaysians in key government roles, have brought fresh changes, but that won't pay the bills because the economy is in dire straits.

Second, at the lower end of the workforce, salaried workers, Felda settlers, farmers and low-ranking civil servants are struggling to

make ends meet. They aren't interested in inherited problems and additional corruption charges against Najib Razak because they are more worried about putting food on the table for their families.

The PH government surely should know by now why Najib has gained the support of lower-income Malaysians, and what should worry PH is that most of them are Malays from both urban and rural areas.

In the 2018 general election, only 25-30 per cent of Malays voted for PH, according to the Merdeka Centre, while 35-40 per cent voted for Barisan Nasional and 30-33 per cent supported Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS). So that explains the impact of Umno and PAS working together.

On the other hand, about 95 per cent of Chinese voters chose PH, or more specifically, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), and 70-75 per cent of Indians voted for PH. Malay leaders in PH have privately admitted that the 25-30 per cent from the Malay votes have declined since then. If this 20-35 per cent is enough to cause the Barisan fall, think about the consequences if the decline continues.

Recently, DAP leader Lim Kit Siang disputed a survey claiming that nearly 60 per cent of Malays were not happy with the performance of the PH government. "Ilham Centre/Penang Institute survey cannot be a correct reflection of the situation in the country as not even 1 per cent of non-Muslims in any survey will believe that non-Muslims are now in control of the government and that DAP is calling the shots in Putrajaya," the DAP adviser said on Feb 2.

Mr Lim was responding to a report on a joint survey conducted by independent research firm

Ilham Centre, said to be linked to some Parti Amanah Negara leaders, and Penang Institute, a think-tank funded by the Penang government. They found that 60 per cent of the respondents believed that non-Muslims were now in control of the government and that the DAP was running the show. The survey interviewed 2,614 Malay respondents between Oct 24 and Dec 24 last year.

Mr Lim said that if a similar survey were to be conducted among non-Muslims, then a substantial number of non-Muslims would be very supportive of the government since they are now supposedly in control of the government. But this is far from being the real situation.

Unfortunately, though, politics isn't about human rationality, as Yuval Noah Harari wrote in his bestseller, 21 Lessons For The 21st Century. And in Malaysia, the sad reality is that the race and religion cards work, and politicians, even those in PH, have regularly used them to win votes.

It may be news to some non-Malays but there are many Malays who are not happy that the Chief Justice and Attorney-General are not Muslims, fearful that the rights of Muslims would be affected. The euphoria of a supposedly New Malaysia is now turning out to be a mirage after all, and in the battle to win or retain Malay votes, we can expect realpolitik – politics based on practical objectives rather than on ideals – to rear its head.

THE STAR/ASIA NEWS NETWORK

• Wong Chun Wai is editorial and corporate affairs adviser to The Star Media Group, after having served as group managing director/chief executive officer.

Without branding elements, it is difficult for tobacco companies to establish brand salience in younger generations. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR



Why tobacco companies are so nervous about plain packaging

Yvette van der Eijk and Chia Kee Seng

For The Straits Times

The Singapore Government recently announced its plan to proceed with plain tobacco packaging, following in the footsteps of Australia, France, the United Kingdom, Norway, Ireland, New Zealand, Hungary and Slovenia. That means that, as of next year, all tobacco packs sold in Singapore will be a drab brown colour with all logos, fancy colours and branding elements removed and yucky warning labels covering 70 per cent of the pack surface.

Plain packaging has created quite a stir for tobacco companies. In response to plain packaging, the tobacco companies have spent considerable time and money lobbying governments, suing governments, running anti-plain packaging campaigns and trying to sway public opinion.

All the arguments the companies have used to resist plain packaging, such as the argument that it results in crime and terrorism, have been proven wrong. Tobacco industry lawsuits against the Australian and UK governments have failed spectacularly, costing the companies millions of dollars. Despite this, the tobacco companies continue to fiercely oppose plain packaging.

Why is the pack so important for tobacco companies? The answer is simple: External packaging, such as clothing on people, matters.

When it comes to consumer

products, details in the packaging such as colours, send a message to the consumer about what the product is like and who it is for. For example, a pack that is light green or blue tells the consumer that the product is refreshing and, by extension, “healthier”. Tobacco companies use these colours to target health-conscious people who might otherwise quit. The pack is therefore an important marketing tool, which the companies use to establish a brand identity and target specific people.

The pack is especially important in markets such as Singapore, where tobacco advertising is heavily restricted. A tobacco industry executive, in internal industry communications, stated in 1994: “When you don’t have anything else – our packaging is our marketing.”

And for tobacco companies, youth are – and always will be – the most sought-after target group. This is because hardly anyone starts smoking after age 21, and the younger you start, the more likely you will develop an addiction.

Millions of internal industry documents that have been leaked or publicly released via lawsuits against tobacco companies document the tobacco industry’s long and shameful history of targeting youth. In the words of a tobacco industry executive in 1981: “Today’s teenager is tomorrow’s potential regular customer.”

But they were also targeting younger kids. Older readers may recall eating candy cigarettes as children, or seeing ads such as the “Joe Camel” cigarette ad that featured a cartoon camel character. A study published in Jama found

that Joe Camel reached children as young as three, and that 91 per cent of six-year-olds knew that Joe Camel was connected with cigarettes.

In Singapore, too, tobacco companies have targeted youth. In internal communications, the companies referred to them as “starters” or “entry smokers”. In a recent study, we analysed internal tobacco industry documents on Singapore and found that tobacco companies had very carefully designed marketing strategies to lure Singaporean youth into smoking.

In the words of a 1986 tobacco industry report: “The key new business opportunities for Philip Morris in Singapore are among the young market segments.”

Companies often focused on “light” or menthol brands as they knew that the younger people in Singapore were more health-conscious. But research now shows that light and menthol cigarettes are just as dangerous to our health as normal cigarettes. In fact, the menthol cigarettes are worse because menthol interacts with nicotine in the brain, making it more addictive. The tobacco companies knew this too, from their own research on menthol.

In Singapore, the pack was an important part of establishing a brand identity that would appeal to youth. For example, one company created a menthol brand called Alpine, which featured imagery of pretty mountains and young couples, and matching imagery and colours on the pack.

Another menthol brand developed for the Singapore market, California, featured images of palm trees, beaches and surfing.

This was because, according to a tobacco industry report: “California is casual and carefree; it is fresh, free and fun. It is a world where the young people would like to be.”

Both brands were designed to target health-conscious, fun-loving teenagers who were unlikely to start smoking with brands that might be perceived as too strong or unhealthy.

Plain packaging strips away the ability for tobacco companies to use brands, colours, logos or other pack features to lure youth to smoke.

Without the fresh blue and green colours, it is difficult to mislead them into thinking that some brands are “healthier” than others. Without branding elements, it is difficult for tobacco companies to establish brand salience in younger generations.

Plain packaging exposes tobacco products for what they really are: packs of deadly sticks that, when used correctly, kill more than 50 per cent of its users and shave off more than 20 years of productive life.

Plain packaging is an important part of Singapore’s initiative to reduce smoking rates, particularly among younger generations. No wonder then that the tobacco companies are so nervous about plain packaging.

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AI’s new leap in creating fake news

Leonid Bershidsky

Algorithms have long been able to produce basic news stories from press releases or sets of financial data; that is not much of a threat to most humans in the news business. Now, however, artificial intelligence (AI) has taken a step further. It has learnt to perform a tougher task – to produce convincing-looking fake news.

Stringing together a few formulaic passages from a set of numbers is a mechanical job. Inventing a fake news story on a random subject requires imagination; not every human is up to it.

The San Francisco-based non-profit organisation OpenAI, founded by Tesla chief executive Elon Musk and Y Combinator president Sam Altman, has produced a so-called language model that can do it.

The quality of the output is somewhat uneven, but the best examples resemble human writing to a frightening degree.

On the surface, GPT-2, as the model is called, works somewhat like a popular game one can play with the less advanced version of AI on any smartphone, accepting its word suggestions one after another to create sometimes surprising little stories.

GPT-2, trained on a data set of eight million human-curated webpages, writes text by predicting the next word based on all the previous ones in it.

One needs to give GPT-2 a line or two to get it started on any subject at all; the training data set, consisting of outbound links from social network Reddit, is rich enough for that.

“The model is chameleon-like – it adapts to the style and content of the conditioning text,” OpenAI researchers wrote in a blog post.

FROM UNICORNS TO TAX SCANDALS

The sample in the post is a surprisingly coherent story about a herd of unicorns discovered by a scientist in the Andes. Given two sentences about the find and the unicorns’ ability to speak perfect English, the machine produced what could almost be a story from any mainstream news site.

It gave the scientist a name, Dr Jorge Perez from the University of La Paz (there is no school with that exact name), produced quotes from him and expanded on the unicorns’ appearance (“silver-white”) and language abilities (they speak a dialect of their own plus “fairly regular English”).

Of course a human editor might have had trouble with the contradiction in this sentence: “Some believe that perhaps the creatures were created when a human and a unicorn met each other in a time before human civilisation.” The model produced this result on the 10th attempt; the more it exercises on a given subject, the more confident and coherent its output.

Examples of what GPT-2 “writes” unprompted, which OpenAI released on GitHub together with a weaker version of the model, range from slightly surreal to downright bizarre. They include a chronology of a tax scandal involving the late Arizona Senator John McCain: Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski became the first “serious” name in the national political media drama to call for Mr McCain to cooperate with Senate colleagues by either disclosing his tax returns or cooperating with what she called the “full force” of the Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and so on.

Or take this bit of a technology review: The legendary Precision Bass brings a massive bass response and fun, smoky tone to the world! These versatile mid-bass speakers deliver incredible low frequency extension: 32” high-frequency response – about two-thirds of a speaker.

Or what looks like a reported story from Bangladesh: Thousands of people marched through Dhaka on Thursday, many decked in the colours of the semi-arid northern region marked by the drought-stricken region’s tallest mountains.

To the OpenAI researchers, this crackpot creativity is not the most exciting feature of GPT-2; in a technical paper, they discuss its ability to perform a number of tasks for which specialised models are usually produced: translation, question answering and text understanding.

It is generally not as good as humans, but the system’s versatility is clear evidence that unsupervised learning techniques can bring AI far beyond highly specialised algorithms that can only excel at a specific task, such as playing a game or comparing particular kinds of images.

OMINOUS IMPLICATIONS

In the real world, however, GPT-2’s “literary gift” could have more ominous implications.

Focusing its “creative power” for the narrow purposes of, say, political propaganda and disinformation could make the hand-production of such material unnecessary. No cottage fake news industry like the one that emerged in the Macedonian town of Veles during the 2016 United States presidential election would be needed for thousands of social network accounts and websites to spew any kind of partisan nonsense or invented news.

They will be shared, too – research shows a majority of people are unable to distinguish between fake and real news.

To OpenAI’s credit, it is fully aware of the harm that can be done with models like GPT-2; in addition to disinformation, it points to their potential for automated cyber-bullying.

So, though the model can also be used for innocuous purposes, such as creating better dialogue bots, the non-profit organisation has, at least for now, decided against releasing the training data set or the full code for the model.

Knowledge, though, cannot be contained in this way, and language models will keep improving.

It is conceivable that their “literary” product will eventually flood the media platforms that are not controlled by professional editors, above all the social networks.

Intelligent human writing becomes especially important in the face of that coming flood – at least while there is an audience for it. BLOOMBERG

When is a person dead?

Sandeep Jauhar

How should we define the death of a person? Philosophers and physicians have long pondered this question, yet we still don’t have a satisfactory answer.

For much of human history, death was synonymous with the cessation of the heartbeat.

However, there are patients in hospitals whose hearts are still beating but who appear to be less than fully alive. Are they dead?

Fifty years ago, a Harvard committee tried to bring a modern perspective to this question. The chairman, Dr Henry Beecher, a renowned bioethicist, was motivated by the conundrum of “hopelessly unconscious” patients being kept alive by mechanical ventilation and other newly developed medical technologies.

Such patients were “increasing in numbers over the land”, he wrote. Dr Beecher’s committee, in a report titled A Definition Of Irreversible Coma, defined a new state of death – brain death – in which patients were unconscious, unresponsive to pain and unable to breathe on their own, and had no basic reflexes (pupils unreactive to light, no gag reflex and so on). These were

conditions suggesting a brain stem that was irreversibly damaged.

Such patients, the committee asserted, were in fact dead and could be declared so by a physician.

Additional tests, such as a flat brain-wave scan or an angiogram showing no cerebral blood flow, could be used to confirm the diagnosis but were not necessary.

The Harvard committee’s concept of brain death was eventually accepted by states across the United States. Today, patients in the US and many other countries can be declared dead either because their hearts have stopped or because their brains have ceased to function, even if blood is still circulating.

In the years after the Harvard report was published, doctors relied on the concept of brain death to withdraw life support from neurologically devastated patients, curtailing futile care.

Just as important, brain-dead patients were declared deceased before their blood had stopped circulating, thus minimising injury to other vital organs, allowing them to be transplanted.

Some physicians believe that facilitating organ transplantation was the Harvard committee’s true aim in redefining death. “There is great need for the tissues and organs of the hopelessly comatose in order

to restore to health those who are still salvageable,” the committee wrote in an early draft of its report – though this sentence did not appear in the final version.

In the years just before the report’s publication, doctors had performed the first liver, lung and heart transplants. The number of available organs, then as now, was small, however, and there was a great desire to expand the pool.

In the main, this goal was achieved. After the Harvard committee issued its report, the number of transplanted organs drastically increased, and thousands of patients waiting on organ transplant lists were saved.

Today, brain-dead individuals supply most of the transplanted organs in the US. Because of the opioid epidemic, those numbers have increased. Deaths from opioid overdose now account for about 13 per cent of the nation’s organ donors, up from 1 per cent two decades ago.

But the concept of brain death was controversial from the start. Many people, including Native Americans, evangelical Protestants and Orthodox Jews, rejected the concept of brain death for religious or cultural reasons.

Even apart from such considerations, a determination of brain death can seem implausible in the face of a healthy body: Some patients who have been declared brain-dead whose life support has not been withdrawn have “survived” with intact organ function for months, even years.

These patients often don’t look “dead”. They may have warm skin and a normal complexion and may continue to grow, menstruate, even gestate children.

Families still come up to me in the intensive care unit and say: “His heart is beating, Doctor. How can he be dead?”

Because of improvements in technology, organs designated for transplantation today can be nourished and remain viable for longer periods, so it is less critical to remove organs before the heart stops beating. As a result, more organs, especially in Europe, are being removed and transplanted after the more traditional declaration of death: the stoppage of blood circulation. Death in these cases is declared the old-fashioned way, after the heart stops beating, typically after withdrawal of life support.

As technology continues to advance, we may even be able to return to the original definition of death, should we want to. All of which serves as a reminder that our definition of death is man-made. In the spectrum between alive and dead, we set the threshold, and we can do so in response to biological, ethical and even practical considerations.

Death is not a binary state or a simple biological fact but a complex social choice. NYTIMES

• Sandeep Jauhar is a cardiologist, a contributing opinion writer and the author, most recently, of Heart: A History.

BIG PICTURE



WEATHER

Thundery showers
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In a whirl over the new year

South Koreans gathered yesterday for various activities in anticipation of Great Full Moon Day, also known as Daeboreum, which takes place tomorrow.

At a park in Seoul, children twirled cans containing burning charcoal in a traditional game called *jwibulnori*. In farming areas, the charcoal is then used to fertilise the soil and get rid of unwanted pests, ensuring a prosperous harvest ahead.

Daeboreum is a holiday that celebrates the first full moon of the new year of the lunar Korean calendar.

Elsewhere in the Korean capital, shoppers thronged markets to buy peanuts as it is believed that cracking nuts with your teeth on Daeboreum will prevent skin ulcers, reported The Korea Times.

Over at Seoul Skygarden, a traditional percussion band performed as they walked across the elevated park, reported Yonhap News Agency. The belief is that walking on bridges during Daeboreum will make one's legs stronger.



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MAXIMUM JAIL TERM IN YEARS FOR EXPLOITATIVE SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH 16- TO 18-YEAR-OLDS UNDER PROPOSED LAW B2

Rooting for signs of multilingual Singapore

Public signs that do not carry all four official languages fuel concerns for cultural diversity

Yuen Sin

Nearly a decade ago, blogger Benjamin “Mr Miyagi” Lee heard about how Changi Airport, as well as other public agencies, had omitted Tamil on its directional signage, though the signs bore Singapore’s three other official languages, and even Japanese.

Upset, Mr Lee called for the authorities to put the language back on public signboards.

“(The omission) suggests that there isn’t a recognition of the need to protect the culture of people who are in the minority,” Mr Lee, 49, the head of digital content at an advertising agency, told The Straits Times. He said the airport, as the first port of call for visitors, needs such signs as it sends a key message about Singapore’s identity.

Well, the signs are mixed. A check by ST of 36 signs at memorials, national monuments, tourist attractions and public institutions found that about 40 per cent did not have all four official languages.

The failure to include all official languages in public signs and plaques, which suggests that Singapore is becoming more homogenised in its language use, was highlighted by former foreign minister George Yeo last month.

He gave the example of how a Sook Ching monument at Changi



The Sook Ching monument at Changi Beach seen in a 2016 photo (left). It was erected in 1992 and carried information in all four official languages, with Japanese at the bottom. It has since been replaced by one that has information only in English (right). PHOTOS: LITTLE DAY OUT, SAHIBA CHAWDHARY



MULTICULTURAL IDENTITY

In a world where most countries are seeing more linguistic diversity, it is worth reflecting whether Singapore can afford to move in the opposite direction.

“
LANGUAGE HISTORIAN AND TRANSLATOR TAN DAN FENG, who says that increasing the use of all official languages on public signs and notices is an important and effective way to ensure that Singapore does not lose its polyglot DNA.

Beach that previously bore Japanese, as well as Singapore’s four official languages, has been replaced by a plaque that is only in English.

“This is deliberately reducing our cultural genome. It is denying us of a powerful capability, a precious inheritance from the past which in fact will secure our future,” said Mr Yeo at an Institute of Policy Studies conference, exhorting Singaporeans to preserve this diversity in spite of the difficulties of doing so.

“The day Singapore decides to reduce its genome so that we become homogenised, that would be a very uninteresting Singapore,” he added.

Some agencies have been quietly making moves to reinstate this diversity on their public signboards.

Changi Airport now has all four official languages and Japanese on its signs at Terminal 2 and Terminal 4, which opened in 2017. But most signs at Terminals 1 and 3 still do not come with Tamil.

In Chinatown, a brown sign put up by the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) that marked the Chinatown Food Street in Smith Street now

bears a Tamil translation, though photos from 2009 showed that Tamil was missing then. The STB brown signs indicate tourist attractions or landmarks.

Tamil has also been added to the brown signs for Lau Pa Sat Festival Market and Merlion Park near the

[SIGNS IN ENGLISH continued on B3](#)

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Singapore’s criminal law framework will be undergoing a major revision following proposed changes in Parliament last week. Among the proposals that stirred debate was a new offence tackling exploitative sexual relationships with minors. Questions were also raised over enforcement against new crimes like stealthing.

Proposed law on new sex crimes sparks debate among law experts

Charmaine Ng
Tan Tam Mei

The Criminal Law Reform Bill presented in Parliament last week, among other things, makes it an offence to have an exploitative sexual relationship with anyone aged between 16 and 18, a move that has sparked debate among lawyers and legal experts.

While most agreed that it is necessary to protect minors from predators, some wondered if there would be unintended effects.

“When it comes to affairs of the heart, things are not always that straightforward,” said lawyer Josephus Tan from Invictus Law Corporation. “I wouldn’t throw this out entirely, but there must be more definitive guidelines to what constitutes an exploitative relationship.”

Currently, the age for sexual consent is 16, but, apart from commercial sexual exploitation, there are no provisions against penetrative sexual activity arising from an exploitative relationship for the 16 to 18 age group. The proposed new offence carries a sentence of up to 15 years in jail, with a fine or caning.

Every year, 20 teenagers aged between 16 and 17 approach the Association of Women for Action and Research (Aware) Sexual Assault Care Centre for help and a “significant number” were in exploitative relationships, said the centre’s head, Ms Anisha Joseph.

Aware supported the proposed law, she said, while noting that it was limited to only those aged between 16 and 18 years old. “The abuse of trust, authority or power that leads to sexual activity applies to cases involving people of 18 years and older too,” she added.

National University of Singapore Professor Walter Woon hailed the provision as well intended but said its interpretation could be tricky. “The difficulty is that what is actually meant by exploitative is not stated. It’s left to the judge and defence counsel to figure out what exploitative means,” said Prof Woon.

However, Mr Wendell Wong, director at Drew & Napier, noted that

the proposed law sets out factors that would “provide clarity and guide the courts to assess the circumstances of the relationship between the offender and minor to determine if exploitation was present”.

Under the proposed legislation, the courts would have to consider factors such as the age difference between the minor and the accused, and the degree of influence or control the accused had over the minor to determine if a relationship was exploitative. Some relationships would also be presumed to be exploitative unless proven otherwise, such as teacher-student, guardian-child, doctor-patient relationships.

“The implementation of the law requires delicate skill and good sense in the exercise of prosecutorial discretion... The legal interpretation of this new law will have to be developed by our judges over time through the cases in our courts,” said Mr Wong.

While the experts acknowledged that more people are having sex at a younger age, opinion was split over whether minors aged between 16 and 18 are mature enough to consent to having sexual relations.

In its report, the Penal Code Review Committee noted that “while the minor may not have resisted the sexual activity, the quality of her consent may well have been compromised due to exploitation or manipulation by the offender”.

As a result, consent would not be a valid defence and it would not be necessary for the prosecution to prove that the minor did or did not consent to sex.

While this may re-ignite the long-standing debate over whether the legal age of consent should be raised, Mr Wong said it may not be necessary to do so now.

“The aim is to strike the right balance between sexual autonomy and protection of minors. The current age of consent seems to have achieved this intent,” he said.

“However, if the need arises, we must be ready to revisit this issue,” he added.

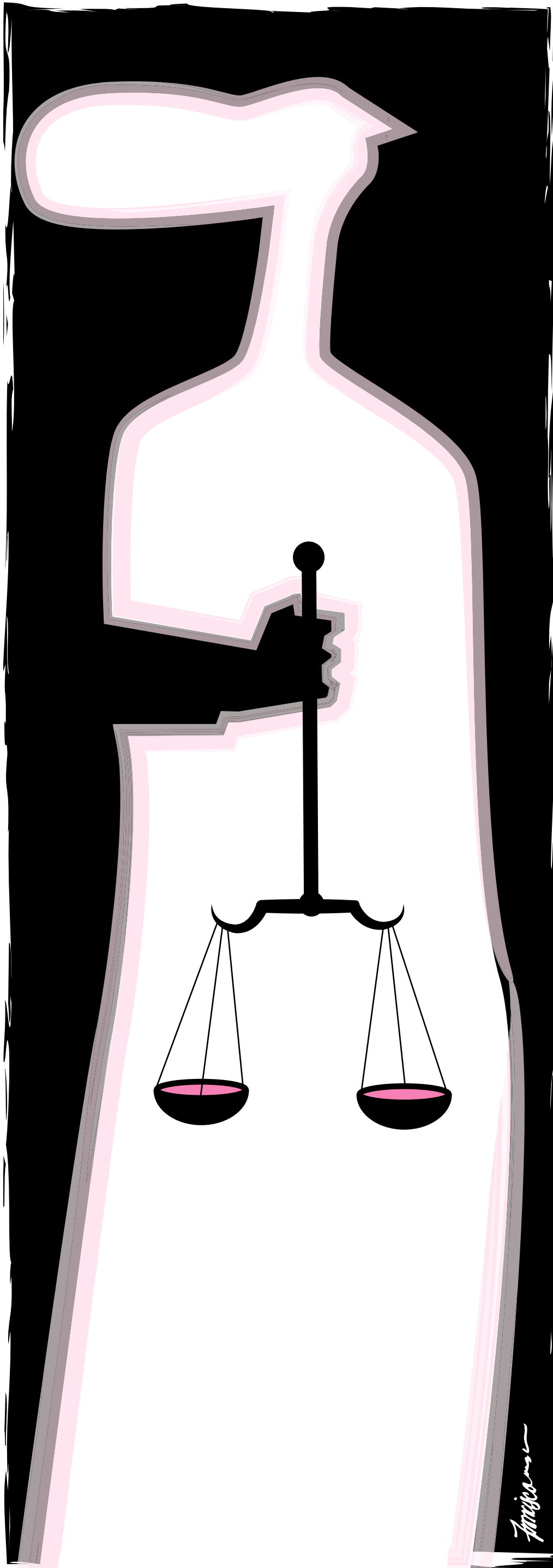
ngxtc@sph.com.sg
tammei@sph.com.sg

RIGHT BALANCE

The aim is to strike the right balance between sexual autonomy and protection of minors. The current age of consent seems to have achieved this intent. However, if the need arises, we must be ready to revisit this issue.



MR WENDELL WONG, director at Drew & Napier



Questions raised on how new crimes will be policed

They had agreed to use a condom, but halfway through sex, 30-year-old Erica realised that her partner had taken it off.

“I felt disgusted and offended that he had behaved beyond what I was comfortable with,” said Erica, who did not give her full name.

The act of covertly removing a condom without the partner’s knowledge – known as “stealthing” – has sparked a debate worldwide, with some detractors calling it rape.

At the other end of the spectrum, some online communities support the act, saying that it “feels better” and is a man’s right.

Sex acts like stealthing and cyber flashing – where images of genitalia are sent without the recipients’ consent – will be dealt with under proposed changes to the Penal Code here.

But questions about enforcement have been raised, with experts saying that stealthing can be hard to prove.

Lawyers said it could boil down to “he said, she said” arguments, and corroborative evidence will have to play a part.

Erica does not remember how explicit the agreement to use a condom had been with her partner.

And even if the act is criminalised, she does not plan to make a report about it.

“If it was rape or molest, I would report it, but... as long as it didn’t hurt me, there’s no need to punish him.”

Singapore could be one of the first countries in the region to criminalise stealthing under the proposed offence of procuring sexual activity by deception or false representation. It could carry a jail term of up to 10 years with a fine and caning.

The offence would cover deception in the use of sexually protective devices, like condoms or birth control, and would also cover lies about suffering from a sexually transmitted disease.

While the crime does not fully negate consent, it compromises consent and poses a physical risk to the victim, according to the Home Affairs Ministry.

Other new provisions will tackle crimes like cyber flashing, peeping Toms and revenge porn under the offences of sexual exposure, voyeurism and the distribution of intimate images, respectively.

Technology, in the form of camera phones and surveillance equipment, has also led to a rise in such crimes.

Lawyer Rajan Supramaniam said the proposed provisions would tackle such offences head on and deal with the “true intention of the crime”.

At present, they are dealt with using a patchwork of existing laws.

Lawyer Eugene Thuraingam said the offences under which such crimes are dealt with are vaguely defined, for example, outrage of modesty and insult of modesty.

Of the 338 sexual violence cases that the Association of Women for Action and Research’s Sexual Assault Care Centre handled in 2016, 60 involved technology.

About 30 were “image-based” harassment or abuse, like revenge porn and upskirting, and about 20 involved “contact-based” harassment like cyber flashing.

Singapore Management University’s law don Eugene Tan said the provision against stealthing does not seem to be one the authorities will use much.

“The approach is to ensure the public prosecutor has a whole suite of calibrated measures,” he said. “They would probably only bring in this charge when it is clear-cut.”

Tan Tam Mei and Charmaine Ng

Singapore could be one of the first countries in the region to criminalise stealthing under the proposed offence of procuring sexual activity by deception or false representation... The offence would cover deception in the use of sexually protective devices, like condoms or birth control, and would also cover lies about suffering from a sexually transmitted disease.

Sex workers are often victims of ‘stealthing’

“Stealthing” might be a relatively new term but the act is not.

Sex workers have always faced issues with clients removing condoms without consent but the term itself has appeared only in recent times, according to 28-year-old Sherry Sherqeshaa.

Having been in sex work for close to a decade, Miss Sherqeshaa, who is transgender, said stealthing is a daily challenge and she only agrees to sexual activity if the client agrees to wear a condom.

“That’s one of my rules. Sometimes they offer more money for unprotected sex, but I always say no,” she said.

Just over a year ago, she was “stealthed” by a client when after sexual intercourse, she discovered that he had removed the condom midway.

She said: “I got a shock. At that moment I was fearful; what if I caught something?”

At the time, she did not get tested because of financial constraints, but Miss Sherqeshaa is glad such an act could soon be criminalised.

The act will come under the proposed offence of procuring sexual activity by deception or false representation.

Miss Sherqeshaa, who also works at sex worker advocacy

group Project X as a researcher and writer, said it is good that such forms of sexual assault are being legally recognised.

“We accept that we are in this line of work where it’s risky, but this could be an option for us,” she said.

“Sex workers are the ones at the receiving end of such acts the most, but is this law applicable to us?”

According to law don Eugene Tan, “in principle”, such a law will apply even in a commercial sex setting. “If anything, sex workers will particularly need protection from stealthing,” he said.

Still, Miss Sherqeshaa said it is an uphill battle to encourage those in her line of work to seek the authorities’ help as many fear getting caught for other crimes, for example, illegal sex work.

“It’s a good move, but will it really be useful to protect those who need it most?”

Tan Tam Mei

‘Cyber flashing’ will be offence under new law

She was looking for love, but ended up receiving unsolicited photos of the male genitalia from the men she barely knew on dating apps.

Sarah (not her real name), 25, received about one such photo a month when she was active for about a year on dating apps like Tinder and OkCupid, and, occasionally, on her Instagram account.

“I was more annoyed than disturbed, but you also feel violated in a sense,” said the public relations executive. “It happened so often that after a while, I would just delete the photo and block the person.

“I don’t know why they send

these photos to me, but maybe because they think I’m not so conservative and would be okay with it.”

Relief could soon be at hand for anyone facing a similar predicament as Sarah.

They can report these acts of “cyber flashing” to the police under the proposed law to criminalise sexual exposure.

Beyond dating apps, cyber flashing can also occur in public, such as at MRT stations or shopping malls. This would involve tech company Apple’s AirDrop feature, which allows users to transfer photos and videos between Apple devices such as iPhones and iPads – includ-

ing photos of a stranger’s private parts.

Under the proposed law, it would be an offence if explicit photos were sent to anyone without their consent for the purpose of sexual gratification or causing the recipient humiliation, distress or harm.

Offenders could be jailed for up to a year or fined, or both. Anyone who commits a similar offence to a person under 14 years old may be jailed for up to two years, and face a fine or caning.

Currently, flashing is dealt with by a patchwork of laws, of which the “prescribed punishments are too low and do not capture the essence of the wrongdoing”, said the Penal Code Review Committee in its report.

The existing laws also do not cover situations where the offender exposes his genitals in a private place, the committee added.

Charmaine Ng

New tech procurement scheme for govt agencies

Open-ended system allows local, foreign groups to offer proposals to tackle public sector problems

Yuen Sin

Operating makeshift “jungle broths” and illegal dumping are among the illicit activities that have been carried out by trespassers on state land.

However, resource constraints mean that the Singapore Land Authority (SLA) is not always able to effectively conduct surveillance for such activities around the clock.

It is one of three government agencies calling for teams in Singapore and beyond to come up with technological solutions for such problems through a new open-ended procurement process led by the Government Technology Agency (GovTech), the agency behind public sector tech transformations.

Under the InnoLeap Call for Solutions scheme, groups from Singa-

pore or overseas with relevant industry knowledge – including start-ups, academia and researchers – can come up with proposals for problems faced by government agencies.

Proposals that are awarded contracts can potentially move through the different stages of the project – such as proof of concept, pilot and deployment – without additional tender exercises, subject to an evaluation at each stage.

MORE COLLABORATION

It seems interesting that we can work directly with the agency and get a sense of the crucial areas of their operations where we can innovate. I hope this whole process will be faster than an open tender.



MR VITALIY NECHAEV, founder of virtual reality and 360 video production studio Vostok VR.

The agency is also able to refine its requirements at each stage.

Governance expert Neo Boon Siong of Nanyang Technological University said this open innovation approach, which has already been adopted by companies such as DBS Bank, is a departure from the usual procurement process.

Typically, agencies define the solution or service they require before calling a tender to get interested suppliers to bid based on the requirements specified, he said.

“Often, you do not know if a solution is effective until you work with the agency and stakeholders in the specific context,” he said. “In a sense, (this model) allows companies and organisations to jointly pilot, experiment and fine-tune their solutions, and learn from each other in the process.”

He added that the scope for such projects can be broadened to tackle more complex and ambiguous problems such as income inequality.

There are also lower barriers to entry under the InnoLeap scheme. While the open tender process conducted on government procure-

ment portal GeBiz requires businesses to be registered as government suppliers, the InnoLeap scheme allows anyone with a good proposal to submit it on the GovTech crowdsourcing website at ideas.gov.sg

“The aim is to accelerate the public sector’s innovation journey to transform public service delivery through collaboration and co-creation with industry,” said a GovTech spokesman.

Last August, Education Minister Ong Ye Kung, who was previously Minister-in-charge of Public Service Innovation, announced that the Government would adopt more outcome-based procurement, where tenderers propose the solutions to achieve the desired outcomes, rather than just meeting the Government’s specifications.

GovTech will hold a sharing session on Feb 25, when interested project teams can hear various agencies’ problem statements. March 15 is the deadline for proposal submission.

Mr Vitaliy Nechaev, 32, founder of virtual reality and 360 video production studio Vostok VR, is interested in submitting a proposal in response to SLA’s call for a solution to visualise land boundaries.

He said: “It seems interesting that we can work directly with the agency and get a sense of the crucial areas of its operations where we can innovate. I hope this whole process will be faster than an open tender.”

yuenisin@sph.com.sg

Looking for tech support

Two agencies seeking solutions:

Automated detection of illegal activities on state lands (Singapore Land Authority)

The SLA wants to tackle illegal activities (such as illegal dumping, squatting and vice activities) on state land.

It is exploring surveillance technology so that the agency and its security contractors can react quickly to ground situations at all times.

Currently, patrols are carried out by security contractors on a weekly basis, while members of the public can also provide feedback.

The proposed solution must be able to operate under constraints such as the lack of a direct power source and dense vegetation.

Making better decisions with accurate identification of precedent cases (Supreme Court, on behalf of the Singapore judiciary)

Judges decide on damages for personal injury cases by taking into consideration previous similar decisions.

The Supreme Court is looking for a solution to support efficient and effective search and retrieval of relevant legal cases and information, including by those who are not legally trained.

Currently, the compilation of previous cases is done manually and is tedious and inefficient.

For example, decisions are manually curated and compiled into a hard copy that is generated periodically – a labour-intensive process.

Judges spend a substantial amount of time manually summarising cases to fit them within a pre-determined “template” so that these cases can be properly indexed.

Yuen Sin



Disparities in the usage of Tamil across Changi Airport’s various terminals seem to suggest an inconsistency. In Terminals 2 (left) and 4, directional signs are in all four official languages – English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil – as well as in Japanese. But at Terminals 1 and 3 (right), most signs still do not come with information in Tamil. In some other public places, Tamil is also missing on some signboards, while others carry information only in English. ST PHOTOS: MIL YAGUI



Increasing number of English-only signs and notices

FROM B1

Esplanade Bridge, which did not have Tamil in photos taken in 2012.

The signs for the Burmese Buddhist Temple and Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall in Ah Hood Road also now have Malay and Tamil translations.

In 2012, the sign for the temple had English, Chinese, Japanese and Burmese, while the sign for the memorial hall was only in English and Chinese.

But a sign for the Indian National Army monument in Connaught Drive is only in English and a sign for the Sultan Mosque is still missing Tamil.

The National Heritage Board, which is the agency behind the Changi Beach plaque, the Singapore Tourism Board and the Changi Air-

port Group did not respond to queries by press time.

Mr R. Rajaram, chairman of the Tamil Language Council, welcomed the inclusion of Tamil in more public signs, including those in Chinatown. “To a Tamil-speaking tourist, it conveys to him that this is Chinatown in Singapore, where there is diversity even in an ethnic enclave.”

But disparities in the use of Tamil across Changi Airport’s terminals seem to suggest an inconsistency, he said. The authorities can come up with a guideline to standardise policies on language use across the public institutions, he added.

Many public institutions and monuments do use all four official languages in their signage. They include the Singapore Conference Hall in Shenton Way and most public schools, which bear the Malay

name at the top, followed by Chinese, Tamil and English.

This underlines the status of Malay as national language, Dr Peter Tan, a senior lecturer in the National University of Singapore’s (NUS) Department of English Language and Literature, wrote in a 2011 paper.

In response to Mr Yeo’s views, experts interviewed said a balance must be struck between pragmatism and the preservation of cultural identity.

War memorials such as the Sook Ching site at Changi Beach, for instance, warrant the use of four languages as they carry a deep meaning as public symbols of trauma and triumph, said literary and cultural critic Nazry Bahrawi.

He added that the four languages should also be used at heritage sites as diversity needs to be fore-

grounded at these sites, or at emergency exits, where safety is of paramount concern.

But it is not practical to expect this for all road signs due to space constraints, said Associate Professor Lee Cher Leng from NUS’ Department of Chinese Studies.

However, given that the use of mother tongue languages is on the decline, encouraging the use of all four languages on these signs sends a strong signal of Singapore’s commitment to preserving linguistic diversity, they said.

English is the most common language spoken at home, with 36.9 per cent of Singapore households who did so in 2015, compared with less than 2 per cent of households in 1957. By the late 1980s, English had become the main medium of instruction in schools.

“The depreciating use of vernacular languages has implications beyond signage. To put it bluntly, every ethnic community in Singapore today is seeing their younger generations become less proficient at using their mother tongues,” said Dr Nazry.

Language historian and translator Tan Dan Feng said having more multilingual signs would expose Singaporeans to their mother tongues in their daily lives and affirm their status as “living languages” in society.

Other than tourist hot spots, he has observed that an increasing number of signs and notices in places such as wet markets or void decks are now solely in English.

In an ongoing study, Prof Lee observed that foodcourts – which started in the mid-1980s – tend to have only English stall names, un-

like the multilingual signs at older hawker centres that may feature Malay, Arabic and romanised dialect names of Chinese stalls.

The use of Western names by Chinese Singaporeans, as well as hanyu pinyin rather than dialect names, is also on the rise, she added.

“(These trends) mark a decline of our rich diversity and identity,” she said.

Mr Tan said increasing the use of all official languages on public signs and notices is an important and effective way to ensure that Singapore does not lose its polyglot DNA.

“In a world where most countries are seeing more linguistic diversity, it is worth reflecting whether Singapore can afford to move in the opposite direction.”

yuenisin@sph.com.sg

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Lianhe Wapao

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掀风潮

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SPEAKER

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Senior Financial
Services Director

Special Legacy &
Estate Planning Seminar

Date:
23 February 2019 (Saturday)

Time:
9.30am (Registration)
10.00am to 12.30pm (Seminar)
12.30pm (Light Refreshment)

Venue:
Professional Investment
Advisory Services Pte Ltd
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(ex-DBS Tower 2) Level 9
Singapore 068809

HOME INFOCUS

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Love is a universal language, spoken in many ways. Beyond the romantic gestures and flowers, small interactions that are seemingly mundane rituals of love can often be overlooked due to the humdrum nature of daily life. A touch, a hug, or a kiss, **The Straits Times Picture Desk** explores the beautiful and quirky moments of love.



Mr Cho Woon Thian, 83, and Ms Ng. 69, his second wife, enjoying the evening breeze at Changi Beach last Tuesday. The couple have been married for over 20 years. ST PHOTO: SAHIBA CHAUDHARY



A woman is framed by transparent heart-shaped balloons as she walks past a convenience store in Orchard Road selling Valentine's Day merchandise. ST PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN



Couples buying bouquets of flowers from a pop-up vendor selling roses, baby's breath and forget-me-nots in Orchard Road on Valentine's Day, one of the most important days for florists in terms of sales volume. ST PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN



Above: Mr Simon Yau, 25, and his girlfriend, Ms Kobe Choy, 24, sharing a romantic moment near the Merlion Park on Valentine's Day. The couple from Hong Kong were spending time together before Ms Choy flew home while Mr Yau remained in Singapore to begin work as an auditor.



Right: A man waiting for his love at Citylink on Valentine's Day as next to him a couple walked past holding hands. ST PHOTOS: KELVIN CHNG



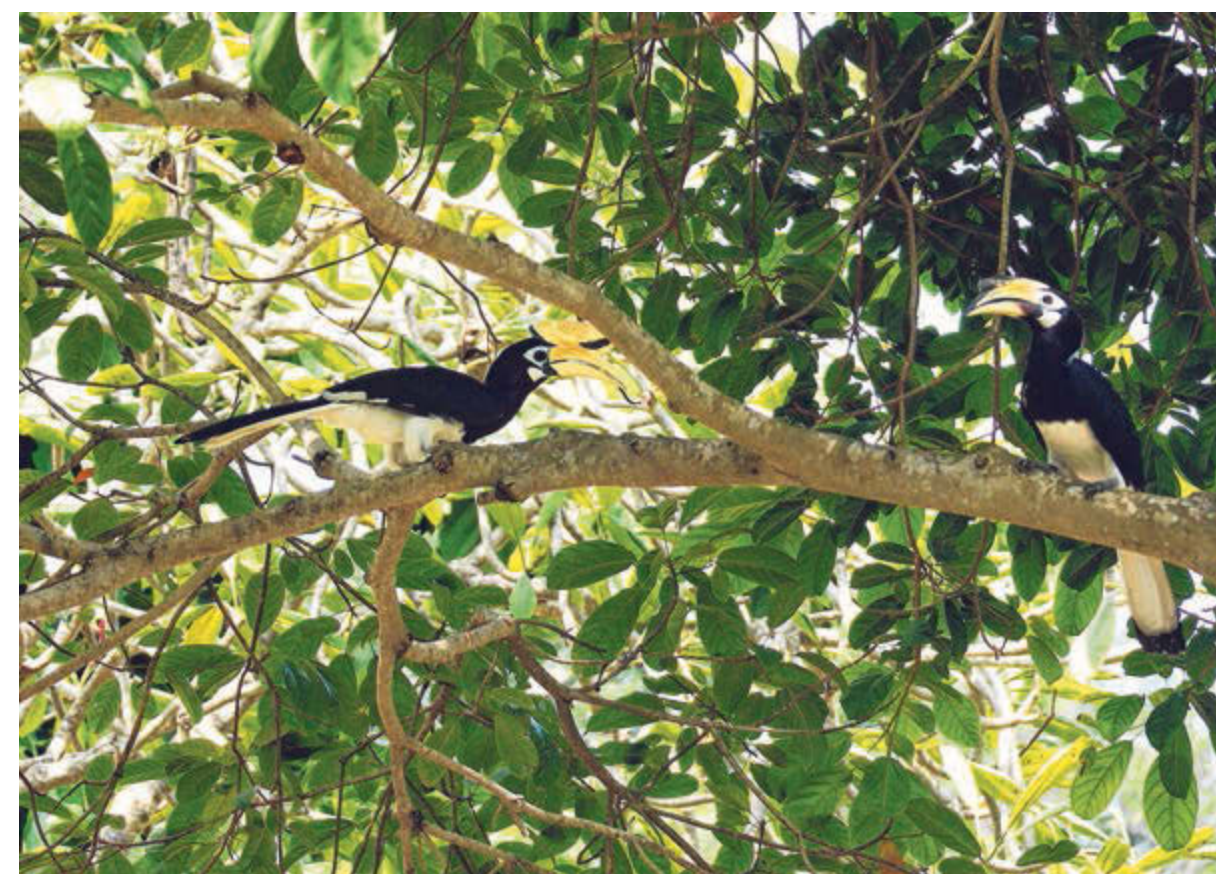
An elderly man going through his exercise routine during daybreak in tandem with his wife at MacRitchie Reservoir. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG



A child walking confidently hand in hand with his grandmother as they made their way in Newton MRT station on Jan 21, 2019. ST PHOTO: SAHIBA CHAUDHARY



A couple holding hands and smiling in triumph as they crossed the finish line of the Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon 2018 on Dec 9 last year. ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI



A pair of oriental pied hornbills seen at Changi Beach. Monogamous breeders, hornbills pair for life and bond to defend themselves against other members of their species. ST PHOTO: NEO XIAOBIN



A couple taking a break from the day's sightseeing, but not from their mobile phones, outside the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple in Chinatown last Tuesday. ST PHOTO: KEVIN LIM

IT'S A — THE NEW MARKET — DEAL



Happy hour starts at Orchard Hotel Singapore's Bar Intermezzo. PHOTOS: ORCHARD HOTEL SINGAPORE

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The bar necessities

After-hours drinking sessions just got better with these recent additions to the nightlife scene

BY MICHELLE BONG

At Orchard Hotel Singapore's Bar Intermezzo, you cannot help but feel it is Happy Hour round the clock.

Perhaps it is how the refurbished space — part of an extensive enhancement initiative encompassing the hotel's luxurious rooms, the Lobby and The Orchard Café — makes you feel like you are overseas on holiday.

The distinct ambience is a nod to Orchard Road's history as a fruit plantation with crops such as nutmeg and pineapple; jade-green and gold hues dress a centralised island bar, peppered with plush seating options to help you linger over one more drink.

Or perhaps it is how there are 12 signature cocktails to discover. Pace yourself and start slow with the refreshing Pineapple (\$22), a fruity blend of rum, five-spice syrup and fresh pineapple and lime juice, before moving on to the heavier Coconut (\$24), a tasty medley of aromatic bitters, rum and creamy coconut.

By then, you will be ready for heavy-hitters like Clove (\$22), a heady mix of cloves, Benedictine and Absinthe liqueurs, freshly squeezed lemon juice and a splash of Matcha green tea.

Throughout this alcohol-infused journey, you will have an impressive menu of bar bites (try the Chicken Drumlets with Mala dip and Grilled stingray fins with black pepper sauce) as well as contemporary tunes from the resident live band for good company.

Bar Intermezzo, located at 442 Orchard Road, opens daily from 10am to 10pm.

Also open for business

Holey Moley Golf Club

Occupying the sprawling space that was once Shanghai Dolly, this mini golf course-meets-cocktail-bar establishment offers libations from beers to wines to spirits, complemented with food options including satay, hot dogs and metre-long pizzas.

3B River Valley Road

Almost Famous

Any craft beer connoisseur worth his or her last drop of Passionfruit Wheat Ale would have heard of this new kid on the Chijmes block. It is where you can also imbibe Lemon Tea Pale Ale or Barley Flats Oatmeal Stout, and nosh on Luxurious Fries — doubled-fried fries, truffle aioli and caviar.

Chijmes, #01-06

Pacifica

This bar pays homage to all things Polynesian via a celebration of exotic spirits and fresh seasonal ingredients. Try the traditional Mai Tai (\$25) or delicious concoctions such as Pāhoa (\$21), an iteration of Aperol Spritz with grapefruit and passionfruit and Plankiller (\$25), featuring rum, pineapple, toasted coconut and black tapioca pearls.

43 Tanjong Pagar Road



Flaming hot deals

Head to your nearest Burger King outlet and bite into this tantalising trio: WHOPPER Jr, FISH'N CRISP and CHICK'N CRISP Cheese. Part of the Flaming Hot Deals promotion, enjoy them a la carte or as part of a \$5 meal served with a small Coca-Cola and a regular Cheesy Fries. For other promotions, visit www.burgerking.com.sg.



Enjoy unlimited data

Mobile service provider Zero1 has joined Singapore's growing pool of mobile virtual networks. Consider one of three SIM-only mobile unlimited data plans — 1GB To Unlimited at \$9.90 (U.P. \$13.90), 3GB To Unlimited plus 12GB Bonus Data (\$29.99), and 9GB To Unlimited plus 18GB Bonus Data (\$39.90). Promotion ends Feb 28. Visit zero1.sg for more information.



Open house invitation

Mark your calendar for a day of discovery and exploration at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) Open House. This free event features meet-and-greet opportunities with student and alumni ambassadors who will share insights of their SUUS experiences, details on 70 degree programmes, as well as enrichment talks on art therapy, early childhood education and more. Register your interest at suss.edu.sg/OH.

TOP PICKS



Redeem brolly with rice

If you buy 10kg of SongHe Fragrant Rice, or any two 5kg packs of SongHe Fragrant Rice or SongHe New Crop, you can redeem an Auto Open Folding Umbrella, while stocks last. Redeem the umbrellas by March 31. The redemption coupons can be found in the rice bags. Visit tspsonghe.com.sg for more information.

Go "low" and win

Gardenia's Low in Sugar range of Enriched White Bread is available in three sizes and comes in seven variants of Gardenia's whole meal and multi-grain loaves. Products in this range contain less than 5gm of sugar per 100gm of bread. Till March 15, mail in any Gardenia Low in Sugar product packaging with a contest form, or SMS your details to 9010-2332, and you could win exclusive prizes worth over \$36,000, including cash and gift certificates for Capella Singapore's Room & Spa.



Icy mango delight

Magnolia Mag-A-Cone Mango is studded with morsels of sweet mango, topped with mango syrup and a crown of rosettes. Get yours as a single serve (\$1.80) or indulge in a box of four (comprising two Mag-A-Cone Mango and two Mag-A-Cone Chocolate). Available at leading supermarkets and hypermarkets.

Natural remedies

Relieve throat discomfort with NZ Health Naturally Manuka Honey Lozenges. Made with UMF 10+ Manuka Honey as a main ingredient, they are available as Manuka Honey Lozenges with Lemon and Manuka Honey Lozenges with Strawberry (for kids). Till Feb 27, buy two packs for \$17.85 (U.P. \$23.80) at any Unity pharmacy. Call 6271-8122 for more information.



Crunch time

You have seen the TV ads, now experience the flavours of KFC's Parmesan Truffle Chicken. Juicy fresh chicken fried to golden perfection is drizzled with a delicious truffle-infused cheese sauce and topped with shredded Parmesan. Available a la carte, or as part of a two-piece meal (\$8.95) and Truffle Box meal (\$10.95) at all KFC outlets.

COMING UP



4 top picks in Western Australia
The Straits Times,
Bon Voyage, Feb 19



Keeping everything in check
The Straits Times,
Scholar's Choice III, Feb 22



Belly full of memories
The Straits Times,
NATAS Travel 2019, Feb 21



Your skincare must-try this month: SK-II's new GenOptics Spot Pen
<https://tinyurl.com/y4c5zmnd>

Information screens for 1,600 HDB lifts, lobbies

Venessa Lee

Chua Chu Kang Town Council is installing video screens in more than 1,600 Housing Board lifts and lift lobbies in a bid to improve communication with residents in the area.

The light-emitting diode (LED) screens will have a rolling display of video and static footage offering information on local events, weekly news headlines from The Straits Times and emergency alerts.

Content would come from the council, government agencies, local merchant associations and community organisations. Announcements could include information on upgrading works, dengue outbreaks and water supply outages.

Less than 30 per cent of the content will be advertising, in line with official guidelines.

Since December, 228 LED panels have been installed, and 1,633 lifts and lift lobbies in Chua Chu Kang GRC and Hong Kah North SMC will have them by June.

"Traditional notice boards are hard to physically update and cluttered with notices," said Chua Chu Kang town council chairman Low Yen Ling yesterday. "This is the first large-scale installation of LED informational screens in HDB lifts and lift lobbies."

Chua Chu Kang Town Council manages more than 70,000 HDB residential and commercial units.

At yesterday's launch of the project – which was done in partnership with Singapore Press Holdings – were Health Minister Gan Kim Yong; Senior Parliamentary Secretary Low Yen Ling to the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Manpower; Minister of State Zaqy Mohamad for the Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Manpower; and Member of Parliament Yee Chia Hsing.

Senior Minister of State for the Environment and Water Resources Amy Khor was also there.

venessal@sph.com.sg

228

Number of video screens installed since December in Chua Chu Kang GRC and Hong Kah North SMC

More NTU exchange students opt for European languages

Rising number from Western countries opting for those over local languages

Amelia Teng
Education Correspondent

Fuelled by interest or simply a desire to experience South-east Asia, exchange students are coming to Singapore – and picking up European languages like German and Spanish in their time here.

And a small but growing number of them are European, American and Canadian students.

Ms Fionnuala Joseph, 20, an exchange student from Britain who came to Nanyang Technological University (NTU) last August, is learning Russian at its Centre for Modern Languages. "I thought it would be a waste to go on exchange and not learn a language," said the history student from the University of Warwick. "I thought of learning a language like Chinese but I felt that if I chose Russian, I could continue learning it back home, and it would be far more likely for me to go to Russia, whether for work or travel."

She added that it was also an opportunity to take an academic risk that she cannot take at home as modules taken on exchange are given a pass or fail instead of a grade.

It is not usually compulsory for exchange students to take a foreign language module, but some take the opportunity to do so. Associate Professor Francesco Paolo Cavallaro, director of the NTU centre, said some European universities do not have language centres because they specialise in technical fields or business, for instance. "You might have to pay to learn a language in some universities in Europe, or language modules are only for students who are doing a degree in language."

While most exchange students pick up local languages such as Chinese and Malay, he said, a growing number from Western countries have over the past few years opted for European languages. There are also those who want to continue learning certain languages that they started on back home so that they do not lose touch with them, he added.

Last year, the centre's German and French classes had 18 and 29 such students, respectively, up from 10 to 15 each a few years ago.

The Spanish class has 19 of them this semester, compared with five last semester; while six are taking



Czech Republic exchange students Martin Kucera and Martina Voskova (centre), 26, take German classes at NTU's Centre for Modern Languages, while Ms Fionnuala Joseph from Britain studies Russian. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

Russian classes, compared with two in the previous semester.

The centre offers seven European languages – Italian, French, German, Russian, Latin, Swedish and Spanish – out of a total of 16.

Mr Martin Kucera, 21, from Czech Technical University in Prague, decided to take German at an intermediate level when he started his exchange programme last month.

The computer science student, who learnt German in high school and in his home university, said: "I want to improve my German and



CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Students realise that if they want to work in Europe, knowing the languages opens up career opportunities. German is attractive because it is linked to big industries like technology and automotive companies.



MS PATRICIA LORENZ (above), German language coordinator at NTU's Centre for Modern Languages.

keep in touch with it... between all the breaks, I can understand the basics but I'm not fluent in it."

He is now also learning beginner-level Chinese, which he describes as "a lot harder". He said: "It makes sense to learn an Asian language while in Asia, and Mandarin is spoken by many people."

Prof Cavallaro said language modules are growing in popularity. Last year, almost 7,000 students took up such classes, which have waiting lists, compared with 5,500 in 2014.

The languages are mostly taught by native speakers and classes are held twice a week. Students interested in taking up languages have to do a placement test to determine their proficiency level before they are sorted into the appropriate class. Depending on the requirements of their home universities, exchange students get a grade for the module or receive a pass or fail.

Ms Patricia Lorenz, the centre's German language coordinator, said: "Students realise that if they want to work in Europe, knowing the languages opens up career opportunities. German is attractive because it is linked to big industries like technology and automotive companies."

"We live in a globalised world. It's a major advantage to speak a foreign language. It helps you fit in with a culture or company more, because you speak their language."

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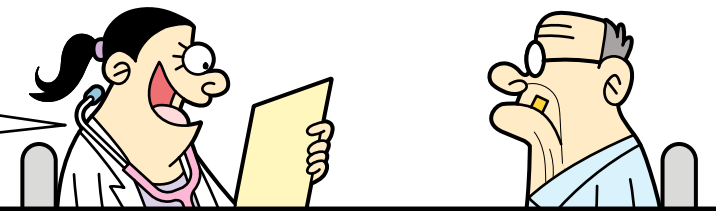
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Get perspectives of those who have served NS

The perspective that it is deleterious if Singaporeans raise questions about the national service policy seems short-sighted and further disregards the absence of substantive engagement with servicemen and the general public (Through the pain, do not send wrong signals about NS, Feb 5).

It also underestimates the value of rigorous discourse over the need for NS and the principles of defence and deterrence, which justify the need for conscription in Singapore.

Instead of being anchored by unchallenged assumptions of its importance, the institution of NS is perhaps best strengthened when it is constantly questioned and challenged by Singaporeans.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Committee to Strengthen NS was set up almost six years ago, there has been little to no discussion on whether NS is needed in the first place, and issues of representation – especially in terms of the national servicemen who attended – are likely to persist.

Even if a survey showed that 98.4 per cent of Singaporeans agree that NS is necessary, it does not mean that every NSF would have had a positive experience across his two years of service, or that there are no areas for improvement.

Having a regular space for NSFs or NSmen to safely air their grievances and provide feedback can be productive, if the views gathered translate into operational or even policy changes.

In other words, a false dichotomy exists in terms of how we approach the conversations around NS, and we should not be too eager to police these conversations too.

Also, if it is hypothesised that “it will be difficult to find the right balance during implementation” of safety and military training standards, then maybe the strategy should be to aggregate the first-hand, day-to-day experiences of men and commanders.

Does the fault always lie with the men on the ground, or are there blind spots that commanders, who may not have gone through the same training demands or regimentation as their men, are not cognisant of?

How do men and commanders perceive these aforementioned training standards? What do they find ineffective, onerous, or even counterproductive? How safe do they feel for the more dangerous exercises or missions?

Without a deeper examination of the issues from the perspectives of those who serve, any developments which follow will not result in meaningful progress.

Kwan Jin Yao

Come up with schemes to help the elderly work

By 2030, one in four Singaporeans will be 65 and older.

With advances in medical science, there are many aged 65 and above who are still mentally and physically fit.

We should revise our thinking that people need to retire after 65 and just do light exercise to keep fit rather than work, which is productive and beneficial to themselves and society.

We need to work out schemes to mobilise this group of seniors, who are still active and fit to do more.

I am sure if we think hard enough we can create jobs which will be beneficial to them and help them be productive to society.

George Wong Seow Choon (Dr)

How much impact has action plan for seniors had?

The news that seniors will get more help and programmes to age in place and stay in good health, as well as receive support from a care network misses a pertinent issue on how to motivate them to do that (Seniors to get more help to stay healthy, Feb 14).

Just look at the many fitness stations all over the island put up at great cost but are under-utilised and left to deteriorate.

There is also the exhortation to use the stairs more often, but little follow-through on getting people to do so.

There are many more such examples of wastage.

Hence, I wonder just how effective the \$3 billion Action Plan for Successful Ageing has been.

Wee Sin Chuan

insurance coverage for victims of accidents caused by PMD riders.

With this, victims will be compensated by the companies regardless of whose fault the accident is in the event the victim suffers personal injury. This will be separate from the personal liability of the rider, on whom the victim can take separate civil action.

Such a “no-fault compensation” scheme would ease some of the pain suffered by such victims.

Andrew Seow Chwee Guan

Make ‘no-fault’ insurance a must for PMD-sharing firms

Although the Land Transport Authority (LTA) has laid out measures to make personal mobility device (PMD) riding safer, such as imposing a speed limit for e-scooters, accidents involving PMDs are inevitable.

When accidents occur, it can be very tedious and costly for victims to seek legal redress.

I suggest that LTA include in its licensing conditions a requirement that PMD-sharing companies take up a compulsory “no-fault”

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NOTICES

Address employer concerns over hiring people with disabilities

It is laudable that in order to lessen the severity of hiring people with disabilities, who are twice at risk of unemployment and poverty compared with others, Western countries and Japan have adopted quota systems that require public and private firms to employ a certain number of people with disabilities (Employers need to take enabling view, Feb 13).

However, this system has been criticised because very few firms meet their quotas based on a moral responsibility to employ the disabled.

Another system requires firms to pay levies if they are not able to meet their quotas, while companies are given grants when they are able to meet the targets.

This system has also been

criticised as employers prefer to pay levies rather than meet the quotas. So in reality, these quota systems do not work.

Ever since the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 was implemented, researchers have surveyed employers about their attitudes towards hiring and retaining workers with disabilities and their experiences accommodating them.

The result was positive on employer acceptance of workers with disabilities.

But the surveys also discovered that employers' true attitudes and experiences were not being obtained because employers were not being completely honest due to a social desirability bias, which is when respondents report what they

think the interviewer wants to hear rather than express their true feelings.

Hence, attitudes towards hiring those with disabilities must change.

First, we should ensure that there is social inclusion and an increase in income of those with disabilities and, second, that there is a more productive labour supply that is positive on economic output in the long term.

To achieve these, our public policies regarding the employment of workers with disabilities could be enhanced in several ways including through training, public awareness campaigns and better publicity to encourage employers to take up such initiatives.

Policies that ease the financial burden of employing workers with disabilities must also be considered.

More importantly, the state must address the concerns of employers over lawsuits and risks, in terms of a formal discrimination complaint at work, or the legal and financial risk should a workplace injury or accident occur.

It is this fear that makes employers see workers with disabilities as litigious.

Hence, these policy strategies can help alleviate the intractable problem of low employment rates among working-age adults with disabilities.

Cheng Choon Fei

Focus on productive activism

When the news that a teacher had checked students' bra straps in Nanyang Girls' High School (NYGH) broke, public uproar ensued (Nanyang Girls' High apologises after attire check made students 'feel uncomfortable', Jan 29).

With the rise of movements such as #MeToo and the Ministry of Education announcing that it will crack down on lewd sites, there is no doubt that the public is now on the lookout for cases where students may feel violated (MOE to take action against 'lewd' Instagram account targeting junior college girls, Jan 14).

Thus, I agree with Ms Cindy Guo, who pointed out that students should be accorded the same respect and privacy that any full-grown adult would expect (Give children respect, privacy, Feb 11).

Of course, the teacher did not need to check the colour of students' bra straps if they were not visible through the uniform. The teacher made a mistake, and has since apologised. Despite that, public

response to the issue has been overly vociferous and, consequently, unproductive.

Little has been done to achieve a full account of the incident from the various parties involved.

Nobody gains anything from such an outcome. Naysayers will continue to criticise the school and pooh-pooh its actions, focusing on NYGH's reputation as an "elite" school which has erred, while no clear message regarding the need for appropriate respect in treating children is conveyed.

Students may also feel increasingly scrutinised should this continue. A Secondary 4 student from NYGH posted on Facebook, saying that the matter has been resolved and she wishes that everyone would "calm down" as the school population has already "moved on".

As we promote dignified environments for students in schools, productive activism should be a priority.

Goh Tze Yi (Miss)

Notice periods for employers and employees should be same

We thank Mr Sean Patrick for his letter (What is MOM's position on 'unequal' notice periods?, Feb 4).

Under the Employment Act, the notice period must be the same for both the employer and employee.

This is based on the principle of reciprocity, and balances the interests of both parties.

It is an offence under the Act to have unequal notice periods in an employment contract.

From April 1, all employees will be covered under the core provisions of the Act.

If their employment contracts, including those signed before April 1 this year, state a notice period, it will need to be the same for both the employer and employee.

Employers should review the employment terms stated in their employment contracts, including the length of notice period, to ensure compliance with the Employment Act.

If the notice period is not stated in the contract, or was not previously agreed on by the employer and employee, the notice period stipulated under the Act applies.

Contact MOM or visit the website for more information on the Act: (<https://www.mom.gov.sg/employment-practices/employment-act>).

Then Yee Thoong
Divisional Director
Labour Relations and Workplaces Division
Ministry of Manpower

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VoicesOfYouth

Crucial to hone language skills

My parents read to me when I was a pre-schooler. Looking back, I am confident that by doing so, my parents had exerted significant positive influence on me, my studies and our relationship.

At the same time, we should not forget about our mother tongues. Our citizens' language ability needs to be cultivated from a young age, at a time when learning happens most rapidly.

Education is never the responsibility of only teachers, particularly in the case of pre-schoolers. Education should not stop at school but should continue at home too.

Hai Oufan, 18
Junior College Year 2 student

Teach students about data privacy

More attention should be given to educate youth on the issue of data privacy.

Young people are oblivious to the dangers they pose to themselves and their peers when sharing their personal information, such as photos, videos and locations on social media. Private content meant for close friends can inadvertently be shared with thousands of strangers.

When relationships turn sour, disgruntled parties may post others' private information online. This can jeopardise their relationships and careers.

Young people should be made to understand the seriousness of their actions as they may start

breeding grounds for data thieves. They must realise that whatever they post online can never be totally removed from the Internet.

Such lessons can be conducted through lectures or classroom discussions. Schools can also observe Data Privacy Day.

Au Eong Tyen Raay, 14
Secondary 3 student

CALLING YOUNG READERS: If you are a student or aged 21 years or below, and want to air your opinion on any report or letter in The Straits Times, e-mail your letter to stforum@sph.com.sg, with the subject header "Voices of Youth". Do include your age, school level and contact details, and the headline of the report/letter you refer to. Please keep to a length of 250 words.

Redesign Nanyang Girls' High School uniform

Ms Cindy Guo raised a good point in her letter and it made me wonder why practicality is overlooked in the design of certain school uniforms (Give children respect, privacy, Feb 11).

Students spend a substantial part of their day in school. It is important, therefore, for uniforms to be designed with practicality and comfort in mind.

A positive example is the uniform of the NUS High School of Mathematics and Science.

Except for Mondays, when assembly is scheduled weekly, the uniform for female students consists of polo T-shirt with skorts (skirt with shorts inside). On Mondays and special occasions, a shirt is worn in place of the polo T-shirt.

The school's uniform design illustrates the thoughtfulness of its management to students' needs and its progressive views on uniform design.

The issue with the uniform of Nanyang Girls' High School (NYGH) lies not only with the colour and material of the uniform. As the blouse is sleeveless, a student's bra, regardless of its colour, may be visible through the armholes.

Even if NYGH's questionable rule on bra colour is complied with, the rule does not protect the students because the issue lies with the design of the blouse.

Instead of spending time inspecting the students' uniforms to ensure compliance with its white or beige bras rule, NYGH's resources can be better spent designing a more practical uniform for its students.

Until the problem with the blouse design and material is resolved, NYGH should consider allowing its students to wear NYGH polo T-shirts in place of the blouse.

A uniform can be comfortable, functional and presentable at the same time.

These requirements can be achieved through creativity in design. Such uniforms would reflect well on the school management's ability to understand the needs of its students.

Yong Su Lin (Ms)

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Waiting in line

People waiting at a bus stop in Tiong Bahru on Feb 4, 1974. The number of bus services fell when services were consolidated under the Singapore Bus Service. Commuters started to complain that with fewer services on some routes, they were late for work.

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Voting on the EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, last Wednesday. Two other deals – the Investment Protection Agreement and the EU-Singapore Partnership and Cooperation Agreement – also received support from the European Parliament. PHOTO: EPA-EFE



EXPANDING THE SPACE

It's about really trying to create a larger space for Singapore, Singapore enterprises and our people. It's about trying to expand our economic space and also for Singapore to gain some level of mindshare... sometimes you don't know when and how this will come back and help us, but it does.



MRS. S. ISWARAN, Communications and Information Minister and Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations, on why the Government has spared no effort in making the EU-Singapore FTA a reality.

EU-S'pore trade pact likely ratified this year: Iswaran

Deal letting 84% of S'pore exports enter EU duty-free will boost investor confidence, he says

Seow Bei Yi
Business Correspondent

A landmark trade deal between the European Union and Singapore that is set to eliminate almost all Customs duties will likely be ratified and come into force this year, said Minister-in-charge of Trade Relations S. Iswaran.

The EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which was given the green light by the European Parliament last Wednesday, will be a boost to investor sentiment and

confidence, said Mr Iswaran, who is also Minister for Communications and Information.

The pact allows 84 per cent of Singapore exports to enter the EU duty-free once it comes into force. This includes exports of Asian food products and electronics. Individuals and firms will also enjoy better intellectual property protection.

Meanwhile, Singapore will remove remaining tariffs on EU products and commit to retaining current duty-free access for other EU products, as well as reducing red tape such as by recognising the

EU's safety tests for cars and many electronic appliances.

But Mr Iswaran noted that the pact cannot entirely stave off the impact from larger external forces, such as if the United States-China trade talks break down.

"It's a bit like a counterpoint to, say, something like a Brexit situation. There is uncertainty, you don't know what is happening," he said. "When trying to make a decision, you will tend to be a bit more conservative, if not a lot more."

Nonetheless, the FTA will allow companies thinking of entering

Europe to factor in tariff savings in their decisions, he said.

The FTA has been a long time in the making. Negotiations started a decade ago, and came to fruition on the back of a "sustained and coordinated effort" by Singapore's representatives, said Mr Iswaran. They hailed from various agencies, including the Attorney-General's Chambers and the Ministry of Law.

He singled out the efforts of former minister for trade and industry (trade) Lim Hng Kiang, who saw through six ministerial meetings with EU officials. Mr Lim remains

at the Ministry of Trade and Industry as its special adviser.

Singapore also received a helping hand from EU officials who advocated for the agreement back in Europe. They include EU Commissioner for Trade Cecilia Malmstrom and European Parliament member Sorin Moisa, who informed Mr Iswaran of the voting results last Wednesday.

EU-Singapore FTA rapporteur David Martin, too, was "extremely helpful... advising us not just about the content but also about what we need to do to shepherd this through to the conclusion that's achieved now", said Mr Iswaran.

"He was in fact actively still campaigning on our behalf a day or two before the vote," Mr Iswaran added.

In the parliamentary debate on the FTA as well as two other agreements a day before the EU vote, Mr Martin said the FTA sends a message that the EU is committed to a rules-based trading system, adding that "Singapore is a safe harbour for EU trade and investments".

Ms Malmstrom said that the FTA will constitute a benchmark for the EU's negotiations with other Asean partners.

The two other agreements also

received support from the European Parliament last Wednesday.

One is the Investment Protection Agreement (IPA), which will replace 12 existing bilateral investment treaties between Singapore and EU member states, encouraging investments and setting out rules giving investors protection.

The timeline for when the IPA will take effect is more uncertain, said Mr Iswaran, as it needs to be approved by the regional and national Parliaments of EU member states.

The other agreement is the EU-Singapore Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which provides a framework to deepen cooperation in key areas, such as transport and science and technology.

On why the Government has spared no effort in making the FTA a reality, Mr Iswaran said: "It's about really trying to create a larger space for Singapore, Singapore enterprises and our people."

He added: "It's about trying to expand our economic space and also for Singapore to gain some level of mindshare... sometimes you don't know when and how this will come back and help us, but it does."

byseow@sph.com.sg

What govt agencies brought to the table, including ikan bilis

When Singapore wanted to give the European Union a taste of the benefits a free trade agreement between the two jurisdictions could bring, it turned to the humble ikan bilis.

Negotiators brought the dried fish product that is ubiquitous in Singapore kitchens, and is commonly used in dishes such as nasi lemak and Chinese fried rice, for their EU counterparts to sample.

After all, the proposed free trade agreement would cover Asian food products such as ikan bilis and prata, and they wanted to bridge the cultural differences, said Mr Darryl Leong, deputy director of Europe division at the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI).

Speaking to The Straits Times after the European Parliament voted in support of the landmark EU-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (EUSFTA) last Wednesday, Mr Leong said there was a "strong sense of relief", given officials' years of hard work.

With the nod from the EU parliamentarians, the pact can now be ratified and come into force.

The EUSFTA is set to eliminate nearly all custom duties, including on Asian food products, and offer greater intellectual property protection among other benefits.

It was a collective effort that spanned nine years, with negotiations starting in 2009, and saw the

involvement of about 50 Singapore government officials, at least 12 negotiating rounds and six ministerial meetings. The officials are from agencies ranging from the Attorney-General's Chambers to the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority.

Ministers, too, made a pitch for the FTA during visits to the EU.

"Parliament is a complex institution. There are many political groups divided along ideological lines, so what was necessary was a very thorough understanding of what (members') interests and motivations were," said Mr Leong, who was posted to Brussels for four years, where he and others worked to bridge the understanding between jurisdictions.

"We had to find opportune moments for our political office holders to go up to Brussels or the different (European) capitals and at every opportunity, pitch for the FTA," he added. Meetings with EU member states or members of the European Parliament took place as part of officials' visits, involving everyone from Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and former president Tony Tan Keng Yam, to Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing.

Talks for the free trade pact took place after the establishment of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 raising the question of whether European Parliament could conclude the pact without further approval from all re-



The MTI officials involved in bringing the FTA to fruition include (back row, from left) assistant director Gerbera Choo, deputy secretary (Trade) Luke Goh, director-general (Trade) Ng Bee Kim, director Chua Shun Loong and assistant director Judith Ho. In front are senior director Adrian Ng (left) and deputy director Darryl Leong. ST PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

gional and national parliaments.

While taking several years to negotiate the trade pact was within expectations, MTI director-general for trade Ng Bee Kim told The Straits Times: "What was not expected were the twists and turns after the conclusion."

"Negotiations were very complex for two reasons... the ambition of the agreement and two, because of the peculiarities of the EU system," she said.

Ms Ng led the team that kicked off negotiations in 2009, and Mr Keith Tan, who has since become chief executive of the Singapore Tourism Board, took over her role and con-

UNEXPECTED TWISTS

Negotiations were very complex for two reasons... the ambition of the agreement and two, because of the peculiarities of the EU system.



MTI DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR TRADE NG BEE KIM, on why negotiations for the free trade agreement were complex.

cluded the main part of the agreement in 2012. Discussions for the remaining part of the pact, which included investment issues, concluded around 2015 but saw complications.

Following a consultation by the European Commission with the European Court of Justice in 2015, the investment chapter had to be separated from the FTA as the EUSFTA would need approval from all regional and national parliaments of EU member states otherwise.

On the bright side, the separation would allow the FTA to come into force more quickly, said MTI senior director Adrian Ng.

In 2017, Ms Ng led a team of five to Brussels for renegotiations, with the aim of concluding the FTA that year.

"We were very mindful that we needed to get this through the EU system in terms of ratification, and they were going to have a parliamentary election this year."

The agreements were finally signed in October last year, following which all resources were marshalled into lobbying efforts. Usually, when agreements such as FTAs are signed, the hardest part is over, said Mr Luke Goh, MTI deputy secretary for trade. "But because of the EU's internal governance... the ratification process required very sustained lobbying."

But the final stretch of lobbying was not without a spot of drama.

Last December, Mr Leong was in the midst of meeting European parliamentarians in Strasbourg, France, when protests took place outside the restaurant he was in. He caught glimpses of people running in the streets before the restaurant went into lockdown, he recalled.

Officials worked round-the-clock in the months leading up to Feb 13 when the pact was put up for a vote in the EU parliament as well.

Mr Leong said: "The evening before (the debate), we had Minister Iswaran drop a call to the rapporteur... (Mr David Martin) to thank him for his efforts and check in on the dynamics of his colleagues." This took place on the sidelines of a meet-the-people session in Singapore, so officials had to head to the venue in Clementi to set up a phone because of the time difference, he explained.

Ms Ng said: "We still have one final step to go, which is to obtain the approval of the council of EU. We will press on to secure a positive outcome."

Seow Bei Yi

MarketsInsights

Markets wait on trade talk, Fed minutes

Also in the spotlight:
Budget 2019 speech
and Nodx figures,
both to be out today

Leila Lai

Investors will have plenty to think about this week, with new developments expected on both the local and international fronts.

In Singapore, Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat will deliver the highly anticipated Budget 2019 speech this afternoon.

Analysts are expecting an expansionary Budget, given a projected surplus for financial year 2018 and the possibility of a general election in the near term.

Non-oil domestic export (Nodx) and balance of trade numbers are due early today, and will offer insight into how heavily trade tensions are impacting the local economy.

According to Bloomberg estimates, Nodx figures are expected to improve to 6.3 per cent month on month or 1.8 per cent year on year, from declines of 5.7 per cent month on month and 8.5 per cent year on year in December.

"Appetite towards the Singapore dollar will most likely receive a boost if trade figures surprise to the upside," said FXTM research analyst Lukman Otunuga. "However, we still see the local currency's trajectory driven by trade developments and the US dollar's performance."

The United States and China will continue trade talks in Washington this week, after both sides said they



6.3%

Expected non-oil domestic export figures, an improvement month on month from a decline of 5.7 per cent month on month in December.

Container ships at the Pasir Panjang terminal port. Trade-dependent Singapore's non-oil domestic export and balance of trade numbers are due early today, and will offer insight into how heavily trade tensions are impacting the local economy. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

were making progress in their Beijing discussions. At a Friday meeting with US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Chinese President Xi Jinping said the week of talks had produced "step-by-step" progress.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump told a White House news conference also on Friday that the US was closer to striking a deal with China, although he added that talks remain complicated. He confirmed that he will consider extending the March 1 deadline if the two sides

are close to a deal, or headed in the right direction. UOB's Global Economics and Markets Research team maintains its base case projection of 65 per cent for the extension, and believes it could be postponed by one to three months for negotiations to continue.

"Along the way, the US and Chinese officials may announce some achievements (like China buying more US goods), but a more comprehensive trade deal may not materialise until the second half of 2019, which may mean a further extension," the team said.

Key US indices rose on the optimism, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average gaining 1.74 per cent on Friday. The S&P 500 added 1.09 per cent and the Nasdaq Composite advanced 0.61 per cent.

Investors will scrutinise the January meeting minutes of the US Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) for rate hike indications when they are released on Thursday morning.

Mr Evan Brown, head of macro asset allocation strategy at UBS Wealth Management, said the statement and press conference at Janu-

ary's FOMC meeting confirmed that the Fed is not committed to any further hikes for this cycle.

The Fed pause raises the probability that the US' historically long expansion will last even longer, he added.

IG Markets analyst Pan Jingyi said: "As far as the market is suggesting, the Fed's patient stance is expected to remain in the first half of 2019 but a halt to the balance sheet run-off as early as this year could help to support equity markets."

This week's data calendar is light, with Thailand reporting fourth-

quarter 2018 gross domestic product numbers today and Australia unveiling its January employment report on Thursday.

Several of the Straits Times Index's heavyweights will report earnings this week, led by DBS today and ending with OCBC Bank and United Overseas Bank on Friday.

CapitaLand results are expected on Wednesday, while a handful more, including Genting Singapore, ST Engineering and Wilmar International, are due on Thursday.

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Commentary

Surviving a bear market in Year of the Boar



Toby Wu

For The Straits Times

Some claim that 2018 was the worst investment year in recent times. It was full of market volatility and economic downturns and many Singaporean investors now look

back with regret at profits that were wiped out or chances lost.

How will this differ in the Year of the Boar? Some say that pigs are a symbol of wealth. Could this be the year for you? Commentators agree on the bearish tone of markets, though they are sitting on the fence on whether 2019 will bring in a protracted bear market.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION

When trying to read the signs of what the year ahead could hold, it is important for local investors to look back at international markets. Several major events took place last year that held sway over markets.

The first and probably most significant effect on the global economy was the trade war launched by United States President Donald Trump against the European Union, Canada, Mexico and China. Despite this bold move by the President, annual economic data indicate that the US economy is still performing outstandingly all around the globe.

The second was the Federal Reserve's monetary policy, which included several rate hikes over the past year. At the same time, Europe needs to solve economic problems of its own, caused by Italy and Greece, while the European Central

Bank plans to end quantitative easing this year and raise interest rates as soon as the autumn of 2019.

The US dollar has remained strong over the previous year. The dollar started rising from a low in April to a high in June, and continued after September, when it displayed volatile upward momentum.

One major reason for the strength of the dollar last year was the trade war. Since the US dollar is the world's largest reserve currency, whenever there is a crisis or friction around the globe, we can expect to see an upward trend.

Economic indicators in the US performed well in the second and third quarters of last year, with gross domestic product rising more than four points. This was due mainly to the massive tax cuts implemented by Mr Trump. However, the stimulus caused by these big tax cuts may be short-lived. If the US economy falls back this year, stocks there could collapse.

In the ongoing aftermath of the Brexit vote, the situation of the British pound remains unpredictable. However, whether or not Britain decides to leave the EU will not change the fact that, when the dust inevitably settles from this monumental decision, the

pound is still predicted to rise.

More recently, the pound has already been rising on the hopes of a Brexit delay. The unstable situation of the world allows US dollar/Japanese yen to receive more attention because it is known as a safe-haven currency. In addition, since the US and Canada were closely linked in the first half of last year, the US dollar/Canadian dollar pair remains popular.

All this paints a mixed picture laced with uncertainty. However, even when markets are bearish and there are warnings of a global slowdown, good investors find opportunities. Here are two key ones to consider.

INDUSTRIES SHOWING POTENTIAL: RETAIL AND DRIVERLESS CARS

In the near future, the retail sector may be one of the most eye-catching and promising markets. Following the success of China's Singles' Day celebrations, both Alibaba Group and JD.com notched new sales records, and the holiday shopping season can further add to these e-commerce giants' success.

The holidays are equally important for US retailers as they are for the Chinese. Statistically, around 30 per cent of annual retail sales occur between Black Friday and Christmas. E-commerce giant Amazon was well prepared for this rush and offered free standard shipping to all customers throughout the holiday season. Good performance during the

holiday shopping season could give a real boost to the retail segment going into 2019.

Another market sector to watch is the driverless car industry. The sector combines high tech companies, software developers and automotive firms, making the sector a hot ticket this year. However, it may come as a surprise that self-driving car stocks were actually among last year's worst performers.

In retrospect, the reason could be quite simple: there is high spending for research and development, so many companies see their spending in 2018 as a long-term investment.

Going into 2019, this industry still shows huge potential, especially considering the much-anticipated initial public offering of Uber, which is also taking great strides in the autonomous car space.

Moreover, news such as British electronics firm Dyson moving to Singapore, where it plans to manufacture its own take on the electric car, continues to grab headlines for this burgeoning sector.

WHAT LESSONS FOR SINGAPOREAN INVESTORS?

The world continues to be a fragile, uncertain place. However, a pragmatic and nimble approach to investing, mixed with close analysis of the opportunities and challenges should get investors through the Year of the Pig unscathed.

• The writer is senior analyst at social trading investing platform eToro.

DB Platinum			
Commodity Euro			
R1C	11.02.19	76.61	EUR
Commodity Euro			
I1C	11.02.19	8196.52	EUR
Commodity USD			
R1C-B	11.02.19	3.97	USD
Commodity USD			
R1C-C	11.02.19	3.37	SGD
Commodity USD			
I1C	11.02.19	10284.24	USD

Xtrackers II			
Australia Government Bond UCITS ETF			
1C	11/02/2019	238.15	AUD
Eurozone Government Bond UCITS ETF			
1C	11/02/2019	262.06	USD
US Treasuries Inflation-Linked UCITS ETF			
1C	11/02/2019	277.38	USD
US Treasuries UCITS ETF			
1D	11/02/2019	213.88	USD
Singapore Government Bond UCITS ETF			
1C	11/02/2019	141.86	SGD

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BUDGET 2019

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Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat will deliver the Budget statement today at 3.30pm

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LED SPECIALS

- Live streaming and real-time updates at www.straitstimes.com
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- Facebook Live show at 6.30pm with ST columnists Chua Mui Hoong, Ravi Velloo and Salma Khalik, moderated by Hairianto Diman. They will analyse the impact of key announcements and answer questions from viewers
- Live broadcast of post-Budget discussion on **Money FM 89.3** at 7pm
- Analyses of what the Budget means to you
- Post-Budget roundtable with industry experts led by ST associate editor **Vikram Khanna**

For more, visit the Budget microsite at str.sg/budget2019

Uber narrows losses, revenue growth slows on road to IPO

Sources say ride-sharing giant plans to speed up stock market debut to first half of 2019

Uber is eyeing a valuation above US\$100 billion (\$136 billion) for its much-anticipated share offering due this year, which would be the biggest ever in the tech sector.

SAN FRANCISCO • Uber last Friday released earnings figures that showed its loss narrowed in the final quarter of last year while revenue growth slowed as the ride-sharing giant prepares for a stock market debut.

The loss for the final three months of last year amounted to US\$865 million (\$1.2 billion), compared with US\$1.1 billion in the same period a year earlier.

The San Francisco-based firm reported revenue of US\$3 billion, a 25 per cent increase from a year earlier. That's high by many standards, but significantly lower than Uber's third quarter year-over-year growth of 38 percent – a growth

rate that was itself only about half the rate of six months prior.

Uber remains a private company, but it routinely discloses some earnings information. Chief executive Dara Khosrowshahi, who is steering the high-value start-up to a stock market debut this year, has promised greater transparency as he seeks to restore confidence in the global ride-sharing leader hit by a wave of misconduct scandals.

Revenue for the full year rose 43 per cent to US\$11.3 billion, with Uber's annual loss shrinking 15 per cent to US\$1.8 billion, according to the start-up.

Uber operates its ride-share business in dozens of countries and has expanded to new areas including food delivery, electric scooters and bikes. It is seen as the largest of the venture-backed start-ups with a presumed valuation of some



An Uber Eats cyclist in London last year. Uber chief financial officer Nelson Chai said that based on gross bookings, Uber Eats has apparently become the largest online food delivery business outside China. PHOTO: REUTERS

US\$70 billion. “Last year was our strongest yet, and the fourth quarter set another record for engagement on our platform,” Uber chief financial officer Nelson Chai said in a released statement.

“Our ride-sharing business maintained category leadership in all regions we serve, Uber Freight gained

exciting traction in the US, Jump e-bikes and e-scooters are on the road in over a dozen cities.”

Based on gross bookings, Uber Eats has apparently become the largest online food delivery business outside China, said Mr Chai.

Uber is eyeing a valuation above US\$100 billion for its much-antici-

pated share offering due this year, which would be the biggest-ever in the tech sector.

Sources said the global ride-sharing giant is considering speeding up its plans for an initial public offering to the first half of 2019, rather than the second half of the year.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, BLOOMBERG

OnTheMove

TransferWise

TransferWise's head of banking Lukas May has resigned. His role was to establish relationships with commercial banks and central banks as part of the fintech firm's expansion out of the United Kingdom and into Asia.

Mr May, who relocated to Singapore in 2017, is understood to be moving back to London to work on UK-Asia trade negotiations with the UK government.

The start-up counts Singapore as its Asia headquarters and celebrated its first anniversary in the city state in September. In October, TransferWise said it moved about \$1.7 billion in and out of Singapore annually.

It is understood that Mr May will be leaving this month. Part of his job responsibilities is expected to be divvied up among the rest of the team, with a replacement due to take over in time.

.....
QBE

Business insurance provider QBE has appointed Mr Jason Hammond as chief executive officer for its Asia operations, which includes markets such as Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, China, Macau and Hong Kong.

Based in Singapore, he reports to Mr Richard Pryce, CEO of QBE International. Prior to the move, Mr Hammond was interim CEO for QBE North Asia.

His appointment comes as part of a recent restructure to "create a more aligned and customer- focused business", said QBE. This follows QBE's announcement in October that it would streamline its business divisions to become more agile and customer-centred, and the creation of its QBE International Division comprising Europe and Asia operations, effective from Jan 1.

.....
Pand.ai

Mr James Tan, former chief executive officer of Tokio Marine Life Insurance Singapore, has joined local artificial intelligence (AI) start-up Pand.ai as the chair of its advisory board.

Mr Tan, a 25-year banking and insurance industry veteran, has previously worked in a number of senior positions with global firms like AIA, Friends Provident, Bain & Company, and Standard Chartered.

He will be joined on Pand.ai's advisory board by Mr Mark Chang, founder and former CEO of online job portal Jobstreet.

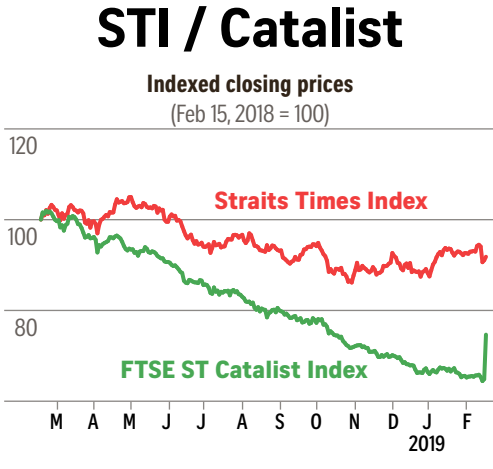
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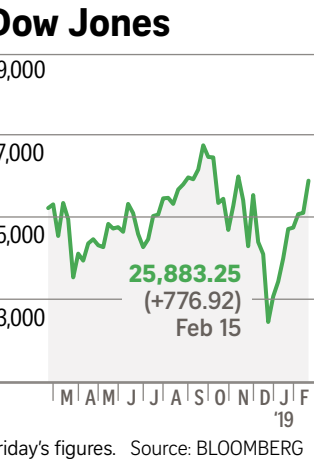
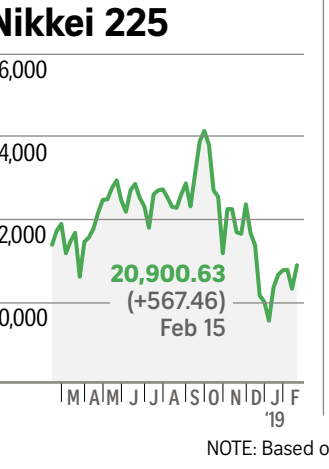
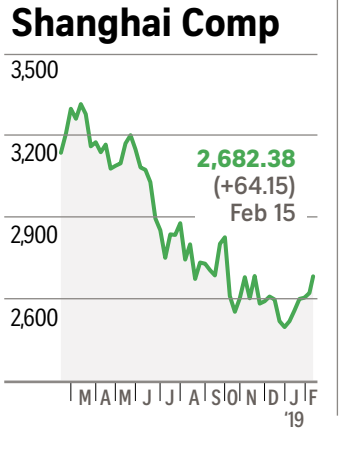
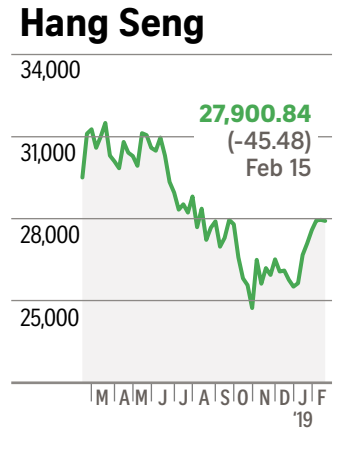


WEEKLY

Straits Times Index
Feb 15, 2019
3,239.74 
+37.70 (+1.18%)
Current streak
1 day
Week high
3,253.16
Week low
3,201.15
52-week high
3,615.28 (May 2, 2018)
52-week low
2,966.45 (Oct 30, 2018)



FTSE ST Catalyst Index
Feb 15, 2019
300.88 
-0.86 (-0.29%)
Current streak
1 day
Week high
303.04
Week low
300.88
52-week high
469.26 (Feb 21, 2018)
52-week low
300.24 (Feb 1, 2019)



NOTE: Based on Friday's figures. Source: BLOOMBERG

Straits Times Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
278	245	Ascendas Reit	276	+1	65564	5.8	1.3
192	161	CapitaCom Trust	187	-3	64413	4.7	1
380	298	CapitaLand	336	+4	33552	3.6	0.2
243	196	CapitaMall Trust	239	-1	43521	4.8	1.2
1359	780	CityDev	941	+25	11927	1.9	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	240 cd	+6	50412	4.4	2
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2479	+49	19985	5.8	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US898	-2	2972	2.3	-
133	85.5	Genting Sing	108	-3	143045	3.2	1.7
37	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	26	+1	51903	3.1	0.6
37	23	HPH Trust USD	US25 cd	-1	51856	10.5	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US711	+5	9790	2.8	0.3
7089	1099	JMH USD	US7051	+333	1662	2.3	0.8
4078	3155	JSH USD	US3863	+12	1214	0.8	0.4
3828	2766	Jardine C&C	3610	-132	2307	3.2	1.8
835	567	Keppel Corp	608 cd	+4	12783	4.9	1
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1152	+4	16989	3.2	1.2
564	455	SATS	506	+20	12924	3.6	3.5
779	672	SGX	779	+18	14528	3.9	9.7
1184	914	SIA	976	unch	7657	4.1	0.9
292	231	SPH	248	-1	8698	5.2	1.1
378	321	ST Engineering	371	-4	18359	4	5.4
341	243	Sembcorp Ind	257	+2	15936	1.9	0.7
358	283	Singtel	284	+7	88929	6.9	1.7
88	57.5	ThaiBev	815	+9.5	243308	0.8	4
3037	2380	UOB	2568	+44	10278	3.9	1.2
898	591	UOL	660	+2	6846	2.7	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1610	+38	6173	3.7	2.1
335	297	Wilmar Intl	330	+1	23713	3	1
154	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	140	-5	109622	3.2	1

FTSE ST Large & Mid-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	CURRENCY LAST TRADED SALE	+OR-	'VOL '000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
278	245	Ascendas Reit	276	+1	65564	5.8	1.3
120	105	Ascott Reit	113	-3	17710	6.3	1
74.5	59	Sumitama Agri	68	-0.5	827	1.1	1.6
178	143	CDL HTrust	158	-4	11080	-	1
192	161	CapitaCom Trust	187	-3	64413	4.7	1
380	298	CapitaLand	336	+4	33552	3.6	0.7
243	196	CapitaMall Trust	239	-1	43521	4.8	1.2
164	133	CapitaChina Tr	143	-5	12133	7.1	0.9
1359	780	CityDev	941	+25	11927	1.9	0.8
251	196	ComfortDelGro	240 cd	+6	50412	4.4	2
3128	2265	DBS Grp	2479	+49	19985	5.8	1.4
994	767	DairyFarm USD	US898	-2	2972	2.3	-
73.5	59	Far East HTrust	64 cd	-2.5	32453	-	0.7
183	150	First Resour	172	+1	3418	4	2
231	212	Fraser & Neave	228	+2	7509	5.3	109.6
112	101	Fraser & Neave	111	+3	38841	6.2	12
133	85.5	Genting Sing	108	-3	143045	3.2	1.7
37	22.5	Golden Agri-Res	26	+1	51903	3.1	0.6
224	167	GuocoLand Ltd	186	+1	529	3.8	0.6
37	23	HPH Trust USD	US25 cd	-1	51856	10.5	0.4
744	588	HongkongLand USD	US711	+5	9790	2.8	0.3
7089	1099	JMH USD	US7051	+333	1662	2.3	0.8
4078	3155	JSH USD	US3863	+12	1214	0.8	0.4
3828	2766	Jardine C&C	3610	-132	2307	3.2	1.8
58	44.5	Keppel Infra Tr	50.5	unch	47094	7.4	1.8
835	567	Keppel Corp	608 cd	+4	12783	4.9	1
124	108	Keppel Reit	122	+1	58171	4.6	0.9
215	151	MI	-1	10432	-	1.4	1.5
273	170	Man Oriental USD	US207	+11	553	1.4	1.5
186	152	Mapletree Com Tr	179	-3	40199	5.1	12
206	184	Mapletree Ind Tr	199 cd	-3	27229	5.9	1.3
140	118	Mapletree Log Tr	139	unch	65959	5.5	1.2
128	107	Mapletree NAC Tr	125	-1	34239	6	0.9
83	73	NetLink NBN Tr	80.5	+2.5	79907	-	0.6
1404	1036	OCBC Bank	1152	+4	16989	3.2	1.2
199	136	OUE	158	+4	1408	1.9	0.4
87	64.5	OUE HTrust	715	unch	5483	-	1
250	157	Olam Intl	193	+6	2524	3.9	1
59	28	Oxley	32	+2	21672	4.7	0.9
291	256	ParkwayLife Reit	280	-4	2972	4.6	1.5
121	98	Raffles Medical	111	+1	3050	2	2.6
564	455	SATS	506	+20	12924	3.6	3.5
779	672	SGX	779	+18	14528	3.9	9.7
1184	914	SIA	976	unch	7657	4.1	0.9
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292	231	SPH	248	-1	8698	5.2	1.1
103	98	SPHREIT	102	unch	5578	5.4	1.1
378	321	ST Engineering	371	-4	18359	4	5.4
341	243	Sembcorp Ind	257	+2	15936	1.9	0.7
269	149	Sembcorp Marine	160	+2	28770	1.3	1.4
58	39	Silverlake Axis	54.5 cd	+6	40908	5.5	7.9
144	88.5	SingPost	95.5	+0.5	14970	3.7	1.3
358	283	Singtel	299	-7	88929	6.9	1.7
263	158	StarHub	167	-27	28097	9.6	5.2
74	63.5	StarhillGbl Reit	69.5	-1.5	16924	6.5	0.8
199	163	Suntec Reit	190	-2	45784	5.3	0.9
88	57.5	ThaiBev	815	+9.5	243308	0.8	4
10.2	3.7	Thomson Medical	7.8	unch	84699	-	2.8
3037	2380	UOB	2568	+44	10278	3.9	1.2
898	591	UOL	660	+2	6846	2.7	0.6
2965	1320	Venture Corp	1610	+38	6173	3.7	2.1
335	297	Wilmar Intl	330	+1	23713	3	1
226	183	Wing Tai	204	+1	1635	3.9	0.5
154	84	YZJ Shipbldg SGD	140	-5	109622	3.2	1
182	116	Yanlord Land	140	+7	16422	4.9	0.6

Price and volume movers

	VOL	CLOSE(\$)	CHANGE	+/-
Zhongxin Fruit	3251	0.005	+0.002	+66.67
AGV	6310	0.015	-0.005	-25.00
China Star Food	85347	0.036	+0.013	+56.52
RHT HealthTrust	71726.2	0.038	+0.007	+22.58
New Wave	870.5	0.007	+0.001	+16.67
StarHub	20,569.7	1670	-0.230	-12.11
XMH	20.0	0.170	-0.020	-10.53
Nico Steel	17,514.2	0.004	-0.002	-33.33
Figtree	671	0.107	+0.018	+20.23
Sing Inv & Fin	165.8	1.500	-0.060	-3.85

Shows the stocks with the highest combination of price change and of daily activity relative to the three-month average volume

FTSE ST Small-Cap Index stocks

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	COMPANY	LAST SALE	+OR-	'VOL 000	GROSS YIELD%	P/BV
145	129	AIMSAMP Cap Reit	138	-2	2187	7.5	1.0
68.5	48	Accordia Golf Tr	57	+2	3215	6.8	0.6
86.5	74	Ascendas-hTrust	85	+0.5	3840	-	0.9
119	99	Ascendas-hTrust	112	-1	5338	5.4	1.3
58	12.2	Asian Pay TV Tr	13.2	-0.1	14096	49.2	0.2
64	48	Banyan Tree	59	-0.5	1618	1.7	0.8
333	115	Best World	325	+6	15960	1.3	11.6
85.5	76	Boustead	81	+1	440	3.7	12
126	79.5	BreadTalk	88	+1.5	1457	8	2.3
632	521	Bukit Sembawang	568	+10	229	3.2	11
87	65.5	Cache Log Trust	71.5	-0.5	10234	8.3	1.1
52	39.5	Centurion	40.5	unch	568	6.2	0.7
166	104	China Aviation	126	+8	9445	3.6	1.1
46	29.5	China Everbright	33.5	-2.5	14288	1.5	0.6
165	90.5	China Sunshine	130	+2	6900	2.3	1.5
103	64	Chip Eng Seng	70.5	+1	12256	5.7	0.6
53.5	31.5	Cosco	35.5	unch	23085	-	1.5
7	302	Delong	573	-12	56	-	0.6
27.5	17.5	Duty Free Intl	20	-1	678	9.3	1.3
77	67.5	EC World Reit	74	+0.5	1069	8.1	0.9
59	47	ESR-REIT	53.5	+2	17515	7.2	1.1
140	92	First Reit	105	-9	8662	8.2	1
152	135	Fraser's Com Tr	149	-1	12007	6.4	1
80	66.5	Fraser's HTrust	73	unch	2567	-	1
25.5	16.4	Geo Energy Res	19.4	-0.2	2410	5.2	1.1
91	70.5	HRnetGroup	79.5	+2.5	6586	2.9	2.4
67.5	52	Health Mgt Intl	57 cd	+3	1167	0.6	5.4
279	73	Hi-P Intl	100	+7.5	37323	2.5	1.5
283	252	Hong Leong Fin	269	+4	727	4.8	0.6
80.5	71	IREIT Global	76	+0.5	646	7.8	1.1
37	18.3	Indofood Agri	21.5	unch	1760	-	0.3
84	43	Japfa	79	-0.5	15013	0.6	1.5
53	11.5	KSH	53	+1.5	98	4.2	0.9
66.5	unch	Keppel DC Reit	145	+1	28997	5	1.4
189	128	Keppel T&T	188	unch	424	-	1.2
119	7	KrisEnergy	8	-0.3	54083	-	1
71	44.5	Lian Beng	49	+1	1455	4.6	0.4
40.5	18	Lippo Malls Tr	23.5	-2	24478	14.6	0.9
53	28.5	MM2 Asia	28.5	-4	7855	-	1.6
95	69.5	ManulifeReit USD	87 cd	+2	8425	6.4	0.8
120	95	Metro	99	-0.5	853	5.1	0.6
21	5	Noble	8.1	susp	-	-	-
63.4	45	OUE Com Reit	50	unch	5993	7	0.7
66	54	PEC	56.5	-0.5	257	3.5	0.6
39.5	17	POSH	18.3	-0.2	935	-	0.5
64.5	44.5	Q&M Dental	48	-1	2514	3.4	3.4
110	55.5	QAF Ltd	71	+0.5	521	7	0.8
124	96	Riverstone	113	+1	299	2	3.7
54.5	22	SIIC Environment	35.5	+3	2753	-	0.6
45	38.5	Sabana Reit	42.5	+1	4148	7.5	0.7
119	91	Sheng Siong	108	-3	5654	3.1	6
25.5	3.3	Sino Grandness	6.2	+0.9	24091	-	0.1
69	56	SoilbuildBizReit	60	unch	3107	8.8	1
129	80.5	Tianjin ZX USD	90.5	+2	1811	-	0.7
46.5	32.5	Tuan Sing	38.5 cd	unch	1550	2.3	0.4
136	54	UMS	67	+1	22574	7.5	1.6
112	58.5	Valuetronics	69	-4	34807	6.6	1.5
15	8.3	Ying Li Intl	12.3	unch	25130	-	0.3
48.5	24	Yoma Strategic	34.5	+2	29158	0.7	0.9
33	16.1	Yongnam	17.3	-0.3	4226	-	0.3

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want...
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23



Eileen Wong Mei Lin

Age: 54

Was called home to be with the Lord on 17 February 2019.
Dearly missed and fondly remembered by loved ones.

Husband: Huang Hai

Father: Wong Chew Tiong (deceased)	Mother: Khoo Lay Im
Godson: Jeremy Yong (Nephew)	Daughter: Huang WanTing
Sister: Grace Wong	Brother-in-law: Thomas Yong
Brother: Baldwin Wong	Sister-in-law: Wong Min Hsiu
Nephews: Timothy Yong Zachary Wong Nicholas Wong	Niece: Charlotte Yong

And all relatives and friends.

Wake is held at Church of St. Stephen, Prayer Room 2,
30 Sallim Road, Singapore 387639
from Monday 18 February 2019, 5.00pm onwards.

Night services on Tuesday and Wednesday,
19 and 20 February 2019 at 8.00pm.

Encoffining on Thursday 21 February 2019 at 9.45am,
thereafter cortege leaves for Mandai Crematorium Hall 2
for cremation at 11.00am.

"Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23:6



LEONARD CHOONG WAI FOON

Age: 84

was called home to be with the Lord on 16 February 2019,
leaving behind loved ones.

Wife: Rose Loh Oi Lai

Son:
Edmund Choong Chewn Seng

Daughters:
Florence Choong Mei Yoong
Grace Choong Mei Ling

Audrey Choong Jia Yuan
Alisa Choong Hwee Xuan
Amelia Choong Rui Lin
Sarah Goh Tse Yun

Daughter-in-law:
Sheila Goh Bee Hua

Sons-in-law:
Vincent Goh Sze Hee
Wan Zaid

Grandchildren:

Claire Goh Tse Ting
Wan Azmi
Nurhidayah
Wan Irfan

And all relatives and friends.

Wake is held at 30 Sallim Road, Church of Saint Stephen, S'pore 387639.
(Room 1 from 11am to 9pm)

Prayer services will be held on Monday 18 Feb and Tuesday 19 Feb at 8pm.

Funeral Mass will be held on Wednesday 20 February 2019
at Church of Saint Stephen at 11am, thereafter to
Mandai Crematorium Hall 2 for cremation at 1pm.

Come, you whom my Father has blessed,
inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



AMY ONG LENG NEO
(KOH LENG NEO)

AGE: 85

Was called home to be with the Lord
on 16 February 2019. Deeply missed and
dearly remembered by her loved ones.

BELOVED HUSBAND:
THE LATE PATRICK BONG KHOY SIP

DAUGHTERS:
BRIGIT ALICIA BONG
GENEVIEVE BONG
MILLCENT BONG

SONS-IN-LAW:
WILLIAM TAN
ANDY YAP
DESMOND LING

GRANDCHILDREN:
BENEDICT TAN
BEVERLY TAN
MEGAN YAP
MARCUS LOW
JORDAN YAP

GRANDCHILDREN-IN-LAW:
SAMANTHA JOY LOH
FARLEY LIM

GOD DAUGHTERS:
MAGGIE KOH, PATRICIA & CHRISTINA TAN,
JOAN SEET AND YVONNE TAN

AND ALL RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

WAKE IS HELD AT BLK 5A JALAN BATU,
SINGAPORE 431005

NIGHTLY PRAYERS AT 8PM

CORTEGE LEAVES ON WEDNESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2019
AT 1.15PM. FUNERAL MASS AT 1.45PM AT
CHURCH OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE,
4 SANDY LANE SINGAPORE 437321, THEREAFTER TO
MANDAI CREMATORIUM HALL 2 FOR
CREMATION SERVICE AT 3.45PM.

With Deepest Sympathy &
Heartfelt Condolences to

Alice Ang and Family of the late



MR TENG TIN HOW STEVEN
Departed on 15 February 2019

Mr Steven Teng,
our Past Club President (2009-2010) and
Assistant Governor (2018/2019).

He will be sadly missed and
fondly remembered.

From

The Board of Directors and all members of
Rotary Club of Raffles City

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not be in want...
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." Psalm 23



Lim Puay Tien
Sr Anne Marie Lim
(former Carmelite Sister)

Age: 93

Today, heaven gained an angel. This pure heart was saintly,
always putting others before self... guardian, teacher,
and foster mother to many. Your work is done, sweet LaoKo;
rest well. You are free from the chains that bound you.

Called home to be with the Lord on 16 February 2019,
you are deeply loved and fondly remembered by nephews,
nieces, grandnephews, grandnieces, great-grandnephews,
great-grandnieces, godchildren, all relatives and loved ones.

Wake at Holy Spirit Oratory, Church of the Holy Spirit,
248 Upper Thomson Road, Singapore 574371.

Nightly prayers will be held at 8.00pm.

Cortege leaves on Thursday 21 February 2019 at 9.30am
for Funeral Mass at Church of the Nativity of the BVM at
10.00am, thereafter to Mandai Crematorium Hall 1 for
cremation at 12.05pm.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF



JUSTINA WONG

Deeply missed by

Brothers, Sisters, Brothers-in-law, Sisters-in-law,
Nephews & Nieces

Athma Shanthi Pooja
The Family of the Late



Marimuthu s/o Govindasamy
(St Georges Mari) (Ex PUB / SOC)

Departed on 4 February 2019

Wish to express their heartfelt thanks and appreciation
to all relatives, friends and colleagues for their
kind assistance, attendance, condolences,
prayers, contributions and wreaths
during their recent bereavement.

Karumathi Prayers will be held on the night of
Monday 18 February 2019 at Block 430 Choa Chu Kang
Avenue 4, #02-607, Singapore 680430.

Athma Shanthi Prayers will be held on Tuesday
19 February 2019 at 7.30pm at Sri Arasakesari Sivan
Temple, 25 Sungei Kadut Avenue, Singapore 729679.

Please treat this as a personal invitation.
Tel: 8445 5769 / 9742 9101

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want
- Psalm 23:1

1st Anniversary
In Loving Memory of



Jennifer Wong Wai Kuen
Called home to be with the Lord on
18 February 2018

Greatly cherished, much loved and dearly missed
Always remembered by family and loved ones

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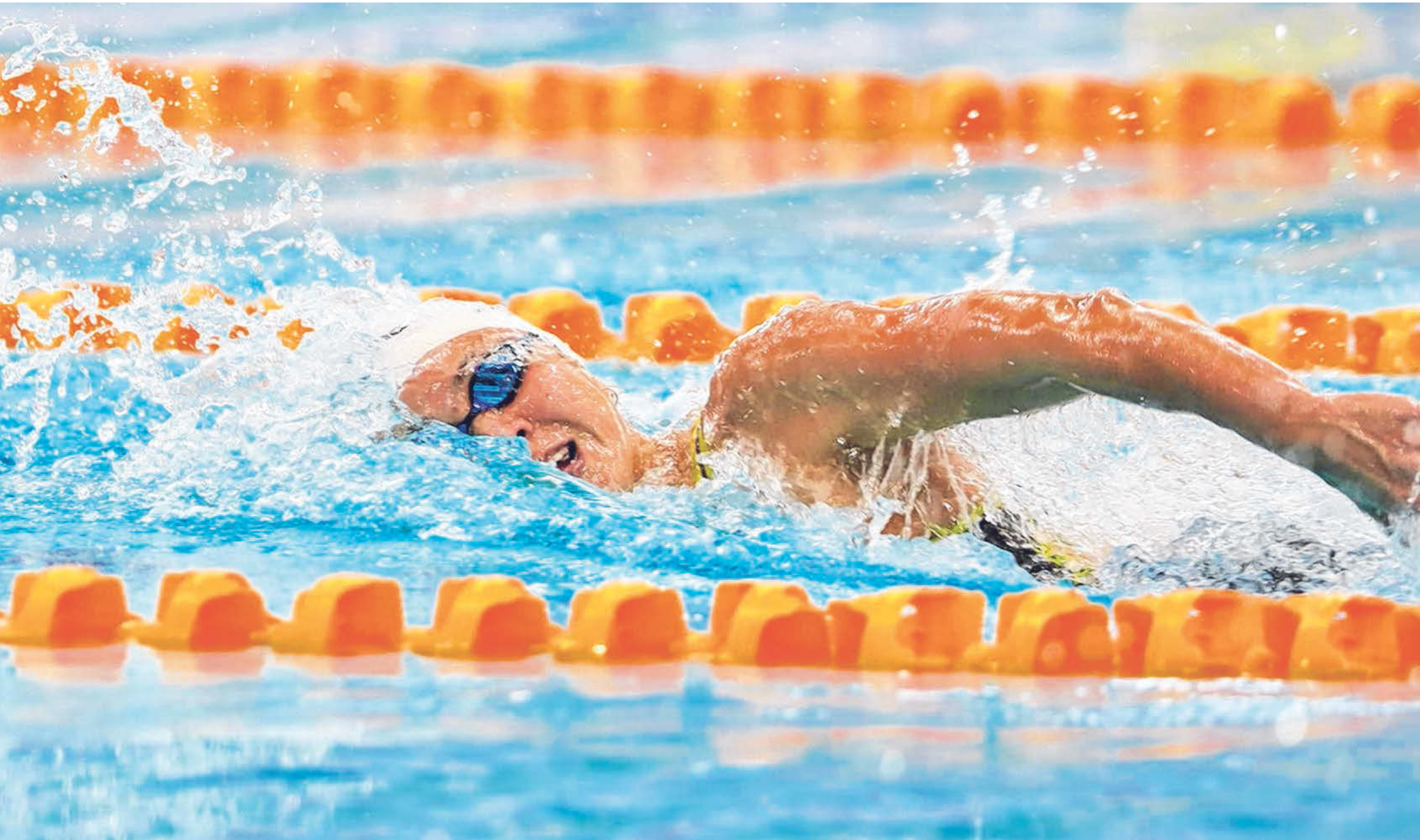
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SPORT

67

AGE OF OLDEST WOMAN TO COMPLETE 7 MARATHONS IN WORLD CHALLENGE C6



National swimmer Quah Ting Wen competing at the Singapore Swim Series presented by OCBC yesterday. The 26-year-old set a national record in the women's 100m freestyle event, clocking 55.41sec and breaking her own mark of 55.52sec set in 2016. PHOTO: SINGAPORE SWIMMING ASSOCIATION

QUAH STILL HAS THE FIRE

Texas stint changed veteran swimmer's mindset as she sets national record in 100m freestyle

Laura Chia

After winning a bronze medal as part of the women's 4x100m medley team at the Asian Games in Indonesia last year, Quah Ting Wen was often asked if she would hang up her goggles as she was "one of the oldest" swimmers in the Singapore national team.

Keen to block herself from "all that unnecessary noise", the 26-year-old went to Texas in the United States in December to train with her younger sister Jing Wen, who studies at Texas A&M University. The month-long stint rekindled the passion and competitive fire in her.

"I found that I still very much enjoy swimming and racing. I realised that I needed to take more ownership of my swimming," Quah told

The Straits Times yesterday.

"I learnt to put all that noise aside and change the way I approached training and I've been a lot happier. "I did what I needed to do for myself instead of going with the flow and listening to what other people had to say."

And doing it her way has paid off. Quah clocked 55.41 seconds to win the women's 100m freestyle at the Singapore Swim Series presented by OCBC at the OCBC Aquatic Centre yesterday. In the process, she set a national record, bettering her own mark of 55.52sec set in 2016.

"I feel good. I think this weekend was the first time in quite a long time that I've been excited to race," said Quah, who also holds national records in the 50m free, 200m free and the 400m individual medley.

"Before every meet, I go in with a mindset that I want to do well and swim fast, but it's usually accompanied with a lot of nerves and expectations. This time, I felt more confident in my preparation for the swims."

Her coach Leonard Tan, who is

seconded to the National Training Centre from the National Youth Sports Institute, praised the progress and consistency shown by the lanky swimmer in training in the past seven weeks.

The former national swimmer told ST: "I feel happy for her that she's in a better place in terms of her overall physical state.

"We've been focusing a lot on her freestyle and made some minor tweaks to her stroke while working on her fitness and speed.

"She's looking a lot better but, of course, it's a work in progress. The next step, which is her goal as well, is to get her timing for the 100m freestyle to below 55 seconds."

Quah will be competing at the Singapore National Age Group Championships next month in a bid to qualify for the SEA Games in the Philippines at the end of the year.

The two-time Olympian is also aiming to qualify for next year's Tokyo Olympics.

And she is keen to build on the lessons learnt during her recent stint in Texas.

She said: "Swimming is a very

competitive sport and it can get intense sometimes.

"When I was training with my sister, the coaches and swimmers were all so supportive of each other and rallied around each other.

"I tried to hold on to that vibe – it was a little thing I brought to training to keep myself going, keep myself happy and motivated. And I've been swimming better in the past seven weeks.

"It made me want to keep going and reminded me why I'm swimming. I realised what I needed for myself and I know that I'm not ready to walk away from the sport even though I'm older."

Meanwhile, Jonathan Tan set a national Under-17 record in the 100m freestyle at the Singapore Swim Series yesterday.

The 16-year-old clocked 49.81sec to surpass his previous mark of 50.24sec set last year. The teenager was part of the quartet who won a 4x200m freestyle relay bronze at last year's Asian Games in a national record time of 7min 14.15sec.

NOT READY TO RETIRE

It made me want to keep going and reminded me why I'm swimming. I realised what I needed for myself and I know that I'm not ready to walk away from the sport even though I'm older.

QUAH TING WEN, national swimmer, on how the month-long stint she went through in the United States has rekindled the passion and competitive fire in her.

Final-day flourish wins Yip a silver

Sazali Abdul Aziz

Yip Pin Xiu saved her best for last in the Melbourne leg of the 2019 World Para Swimming World Series when she won Singapore's only medal of the meet on the final day yesterday.

The 27-year-old swimmer scored 792 points to claim a silver in the 50m backstroke multi-class event.

The World Para Swimming World Series uses a standardised multi-class points system, which sees swimmers of different classifications awarded points after their timings are compared with the world records in their respective classes.

The closer a swimmer's timing is to the world record, the higher the points.

Tupou Neiufi of New Zealand won the 50m backstroke multi-

class race with 862 points, while Australia's Madel McTernan was third with 648 points.

"As this is the first competition of the season, I think it is a good baseline to work on," said Nominated Member of Parliament Yip, who won a gold (50m breaststroke S4) and two bronzes (50m freestyle S4 and 100m freestyle S4) at the Asian Para Games in Jakarta in October last year.

"I am satisfied with my timing for this afternoon, but I am excited about going back to work on some aspects to improve it. I am looking forward to the Singapore leg in May."

The World Para Swimming World Series comprises seven stops across four continents from February to June. Australia and Singapore (May 10-12) are hosting legs for the first time.

The other stops are in the United States (Indianapolis, April 4-6), Brazil (Sao Paulo, April 25-27), Scotland (Glasgow, April 25-28), Italy (Udine, May 30-June 2) and Germany (Berlin, June 6-9).

Three other Singapore swimmers were also in action in Melbourne.

Theresa Goh was fourth in the 50m breaststroke with 534 points – 58 points behind third – while Sophie Soon finished sixth in the same event with 516 points.

Toh Wei Soong finished joint-fourth in the 50m freestyle on 754 points, missing out on third place by just 16 points.

But he also clocked personal bests in the 50m backstroke (37.90sec) and 200m freestyle (2min 25.21sec).



Yip Pin Xiu, with the silver medal she won in Melbourne yesterday, is looking forward to the Singapore leg of the World Para Swimming World Series in May. PHOTO: SDSC

FOUR-DIGIT DRAW		
Feb 17 2019		
FIRST	◆	3358
SECOND	◆	5828
THIRD	◆	2256
STARTERS		
1363	2974	4165
4361	6320	6387
6810	8042	8883
	9020	
CONSOLATIONS		
1485	3802	4257
5012	7762	8106
8446	8606	9229
	9617	

REDS MUST BE AT 'FULL THROTTLE'

Left-back Robertson believes Bayern can be beaten and Anfield atmosphere will be key

LONDON • Anfield is made for special European nights like this and Liverpool defender Andrew Robertson is confident his team will rise to the occasion when they host Bayern Munich in the first leg of their Champions League last-16 clash tomorrow.

After returning to form with a 3-0 Premier League win against Bournemouth on Feb 9, the Reds jetted off to Marbella, Spain, for a four-day warm-weather training camp.

Left-back Robertson is adamant that the squad are now rejuvenated and ready for a crucial run of matches. After the Bayern game, the Reds travel to Old Trafford to tackle Manchester United in a crucial league fixture.

"Two massive games. When we landed in Marbella on Monday, our full focus was on the Bayern Munich game," Robertson told the club's official website.

"We need to be at full throttle for that game. They are such a good team and they have been the last six or seven years so we know what a tough task it will be.

"But we believe we can cause any teams problems and we have to be at our best."

Liverpool are undefeated at Anfield in European competitions since 2014, and Robertson believes the home support will be decisive.

"Everyone knows how special nights here are in the Champions League," said the 24-year-old Scotland international.

"We feed off each other. Players feed off the fans and the fans feed off the players because it's up to us to get them to have something to shout about.

"But it also helps when they're getting behind us and it can maybe give you that extra percentage in the game. That's what home fans are for."

Influential centre-back Virgil van Dijk is suspended for the first leg and the Reds' defensive situation is further complicated by injuries to Joe Gomez (fractured leg) and Dejan Lovren (hamstring).

This means that manager Jurgen Klopp could deploy Brazilian midfielder Fabinho alongside Joel Matip against the Bundesliga champions.

Former Liverpool centre-back Sami Hyypia is confident that the Reds can cope without van Dijk and expects other players to fill the void.

"It is very difficult to find a weakness. He is an ultimate centre-back and it would be a pleasure to play alongside him. He is so good," Hyypia said of the £75 million (\$513 million) arrival in January last year.

"These kinds of things (his suspension) give other players an opportunity to shine and take responsibility, and I hope the ones who

play step up and do their job properly."

After an indifferent start to the Bundesliga season, Bayern are now just two points behind leaders Borussia Dortmund after a 3-2 win over Augsburg on Saturday but they have played a game more.

Hyypia warned the Reds that it would be wrong to discount the five-time European champions who last won the Champions League in 2013.

"When the draw was made, everyone was saying that Bayern were not the Bayern of old, but they are a very dangerous team," said the Finn. "Liverpool can't underestimate them. They need to respect them, analyse their weaknesses and then strike.

"I think one of their weaknesses is defending against the counter-attack, and Liverpool are not bad in that area. I think that can cause problems for them."



Liverpool may be undefeated at Anfield in European competitions since 2014, but Jurgen Klopp will face Bayern Munich with a depleted backline, with centre-back Virgil van Dijk (suspended), Joe Gomez (fractured leg) and Dejan Lovren (hamstring injury) all ruled out. PHOTO: REUTERS

Anfield is 'worst stadium' to visit for Bayern star Robben

Bayern Munich winger Arjen Robben, sidelined by a thigh injury since November, will play no part in tomorrow's first leg, but he feels Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk's one-game suspension will be a weak point the German champions have to exploit. PHOTO: REUTERS



MUNICH • When their Champions League last-16 fixture was announced in December, Arjen Robben called it "the worst possible draw" for Bayern Munich.

He was at Liverpool's Anfield when, in the 2004-05 and 2006-07 seasons, Chelsea fell maddeningly short in the semi-finals.

The first was decided by Luis Garcia's "ghost goal", and Robben prefers to leave it at "we'll never know" when asked if it went in.

The second was settled on penalties, one of which he sent too close to Pepe Reina, and proved to be his penultimate match for the club.

He remembers that as an "emotional game" and, both times, Chelsea were repelled by a formidable defensive blockade.

"At that time, they were really capable of being this cup-fighter team, also in the FA Cup," he said.

"In one or two games, they could really live up to it and perform. Just

not the whole season, which was maybe too much. That was their biggest quality, they were there at the moment they needed to be there.

"Now it's changed and they (have) developed really well. The manager (Jurgen Klopp) has done a great job.

"Last year, they were in the Champions League final and, at the moment, they are top (of the Premier League). It's a long, long time ago that they won the league and that's the one they're dreaming of."

Recalling how he also suffered heartbreak as part of a Real Madrid side that were thrashed 4-0 by the Reds in 2009, he sounded a warning about Anfield to his teammates.

"If you ask me what's the worst stadium for me, it's probably Liverpool," the former Netherlands forward admitted. "You always have your favourite opponent and there always has to be a negative one."

The 35-year-old also believes the "atmosphere is probably one of the best you can imagine in Europe".

Naming Liverpool as among the favourites to win this term's Champions League, he added: "It's (the crowd) always like a big boost to them. But we're used to playing in big stadiums, so we just have to focus on ourselves.

"We know their qualities. In these top games there are not a lot of secrets. It's about the little details."

While Robben will play no part in tomorrow's first leg, having been out since November with a thigh injury, he feels Liverpool defender Virgil van Dijk's one-game suspension will be a weak point the German champions have to exploit.

He said of his former national colleague: "He is a key player at a gigantic club, and he is the captain of the Netherlands team. He deserves all the compliments."

THE TIMES, LONDON, THE GUARDIAN

NO FOND MEMORIES

If you ask me what's the worst stadium for me, it's probably Liverpool. You always have your favourite opponent and there always has to be a negative one.

ARJEN ROBBERN, Bayern Munich winger, who has lost at Anfield with Chelsea and Real Madrid.

More than 3,000 bid farewell to Sala in Progreso

BUENOS AIRES • A small village in Argentina on Saturday bid farewell to their favourite son, Cardiff striker Emiliano Sala, who died along with his pilot David Ibbotson last month when his small plane crashed in the English Channel.

Friends, family and supporters gathered in Progreso for the day-long wake at his boyhood club, San Martin de Progreso.

More than 3,000 mourners came to pay their respects to the 28-year-old, whose coffin was draped in the red and white colours of the team and set against the backdrop of a giant poster, while outside the club, a banner read: "Emi, you will never walk alone."

The club's president, Daniel

Ribero told Agence France-Presse: "He represented a lot for us. We're a small village and Emi was a celebrity, the only player to turn professional. He was one of us. He meant a lot to us."

Describing his death as "the saddest moment of the history of our town", he added: "I would have liked to do an interview because Emiliano was called up to the national team or because of his great form in the Premier League, but this is the reality, and we have to accept it.

"Emi was a very introverted and quiet boy. He never forgot his origins. He left a legacy of humility and sacrifice, not only in sports but also in life.

"He always said he was going to be a professional football player and he worked for that, he persevered, and he did it, he made his way alone. We will always carry it in our hearts."

The attendees included Sala's former Nantes teammate Nicolas Pallois, who was one of the pallbearers, and the French Ligue 1 club's general secretary Loic Morin.

Cardiff chief executive officer Ken Choo and manager Neil Warnock were also present.

The Bluebirds boss later told reporters he had "goose pimples", saying: "It's been very difficult for everyone, but none more so than for (Sala's mother) Mercedes, (sister) Romina, the brother (Dario) and fa-

ther (Horacio).

"You can't really understand the emotions of the family, but the thing today is how united they all are. The whole village is really united, and it just brings it home to you just how important family are.

"Things like this don't happen in football. I have been a manager (for) nearly 40 years and I've never known anything like this.

"People say, 'He never played for you', but he was my player. I chased him, I wanted him. He was my type of player, a scruffy player with a big heart. It's been a really emotional day, but we wanted to come here, and I'm pleased and proud we came."

NYTIMES, XINHUA, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE.

SPORTS FIXTURES HIGHLIGHTS

Event	Home	Away	Timing	Venue
Tue, 19 Feb 2019				
English Cup	Chelsea	Manchester Utd	3.30am	LW*
German League	Nuremberg	Dortmund	3.30am	LW*
Italian League	Roma	Bologna	3.30am	LW*
Spanish League	Huesca	Athletic Bilbao	4.00am	LW*

LW* : Telecast available at Livewire (Marina Bay Sands) only
Visit singaporepools.com for the latest 'Live' telecast listing.

LOTTERY

TOTO

Mon, 18 Feb 2019, 6.30pm Draw No. 3450/2019

Group 1 Prize **\$1,000,000** est.

Draw Venue: Singapore Pools (Private) Limited, 210 Middle Road, #01-01, Singapore 188994

No person under the age of 18 years shall be allowed to purchase a ticket or to claim any prize.
LW: Livewire (MBS) & Livewire (RWS) (21 years and above)
Livewire (Singapore Pools) (21 years and above during 'Live' telecast)
SB: SportsBuzz@Kwai (21 years and above)
Singapore Pools Account Service. Call 6796 6688 for more details.

PLAY RESPONSIBLY
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RCB Reg No.: 196002020



Phil Foden scoring Manchester City's third (and his second) goal during Saturday's FA Cup fifth-round tie with Newport County. City won 4-1 to reach the quarter-finals. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

'BRILLIANT' FODEN TO THE FORE FOR CITY

Guardiola sings teenager's praises for scoring twice in 4-1 FA Cup victory over Newport

LONDON • The 4-1 scoreline was anything but comfortable for Manchester City, but Pep Guardiola knows that in Phil Foden, he has a "player who is ready to play".

The Spaniard sang the burgeoning talent's praises for producing a "brilliant" display against League Two minnows Newport County, after the 18-year-old scored twice on Saturday to help City reach the FA Cup quarter-finals and keep alive

their bid for an unprecedented quadruple this season.

Leroy Sane and Riyad Mahrez scored the other goals as the Premier League champions left it late to break the home team's brave resistance.

Guardiola told reporters afterwards: "Today was a good test for him, with second balls, long balls, he had to adapt."

"He learnt a lot, I'm sure, and he

helped us to win the game with two incredible goals.

"We know that he's a guy who (is) close to the box and has this mentality to score goals, and he has the ability to do that. He was top."

Although City dominated possession, the visitors endured "a really tough game", with City clinging on to a one-goal lead with only two minutes of normal time remaining after Padraig Amond, capitalising on a mistake by Aymeric Laporte, lobbed Ederson.

However, Foden and Mahrez struck again for City to end hopes of a Newport fightback, and Guardi-

ola, who picked a strong team, was full of praise for Michael Flynn's men on and off the field.

Asked about the atmosphere at Rodney Parade, the City manager said: "I'm quite surprised. The support of the team was incredible, chanting 'Who are you?' was nice."

"I understand completely why Leicester and Middlesbrough suffer a lot in this stadium. It was tight - we scored the third goal just before 90 minutes. But we knew the game would be tight."

"What they do, they do incredibly. They attack the channels with long balls, in the second balls, they

are physical and strong, every throw-in and free kick they are always dangerous because they train a lot and do it really well.

"We opened the scoring in the game and believed it was done. They showed us how incredible they are and a big compliment for them. It was lucky that Phil got the third goal."

"The home crowd was amazing. Winning here, I understand English football today better than ever and how tough the Cup is in these conditions."

"Newport used their strengths and we are not used to playing against that every week. That's why the Cup is so special."

In the other ties, Brighton moved into the quarter-finals for the second successive season as goals from Anthony Knockaert and Jurgen Locadia clinched a 2-1 win over Championship outfit Derby.

Second-tier strugglers Millwall also advanced to the last eight after a 1-0 win at League One side AFC Wimbledon, courtesy of Murray Wallace's headed winner.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, THE GUARDIAN

MANY TALENTS

With second balls, long balls, he had to adapt. He learnt a lot, I'm sure, and he helped us to win the game with two incredible goals. We know that he's a guy who (is) close to the box and has this mentality to score goals, and he has the ability to do that. He was top.

PEP GUARDIOLA, Manchester City manager, on his player Phil Foden.

Cavaleiro sends Wolves into q-finals



Wolves' Ivan Cavaleiro celebrates scoring their first goal yesterday as Bristol City's Adam Webster (No. 4) looks dejected at Ashton Gate, home of the Championship team. The Wolves forward's goal, after he slotted a cutback past Frank Fielding, turned out to be the decider of the FA Cup fifth-round tie as the Premier League side reached the quarter-finals with a 1-0 win. PHOTO: REUTERS

De Gea set to get record pay deal

LONDON • Manchester United are prepared to give David de Gea the largest basic pay package in English football history and are increasingly confident he will sign a long-term contract extension with the Premier League club.

While leading the search to appoint a new permanent manager and director of football, United's executive chairman Ed Woodward also regards tying de Gea down as a priority and is pressing ahead with attempts to conclude a deal.

Reports that de Gea is demanding £350,000 (\$5612,000) a week to stay, only to be rebuffed, have raised eyebrows at Old Trafford, given that United would be likely to accept a wage at around that mark in recognition of the Spain No. 1's importance on the pitch.

It is thought United would consider a new five-year contract guaranteeing in excess of £90 million - exceeding the totals guaranteed in the contracts of other top earners such as Arsenal's Mesut Ozil, and United teammates Alexis Sanchez and Paul Pogba.

The Red Devils would see such rewards as appropriate for a goalkeeper who can claim to be the best in the world in his position and has been the club's Player of the Year in four of his past five seasons.

The signs are that de Gea wants to extend his eight-year stay at United and there is a feeling that only unrealistic agent demands

would threaten the deal.

Woodward also hopes to finalise extensions for Marcus Rashford, Ander Herrera and Juan Mata in the coming weeks.

After already agreeing new deals for Anthony Martial, Luke Shaw, Ashley Young, Phil Jones, Chris Smalling and Scott McTominay this season, Woodward told investors in a conference call on Thursday: "We want to finish off the final few."

Appointing a permanent successor to Jose Mourinho and a new director of football are still scheduled for the end of the season.

United, however, first need to turn their attention to on-pitch matters, starting with today's FA Cup fifth-round tie at Chelsea.

While Solskjaer's men have injury worries up front with Martial and Jesse Lingard already ruled out, Sanchez may still have to make do with a place on the bench given his woeful form.

Having scored only five goals in 37 appearances since moving from Arsenal in January last year, he expressed his concerns over "losing his spark". The Chile forward told the BBC: "I would like to have brought more joy to the club. Yes, it worries me because I believe in my abilities as a player, I want to show it." REUTERS, THE TIMES, LONDON

CHELSEA V MANCHESTER UNITED
Singtel TV Ch111, tomorrow, 3.25am

DAVIS, IRVING READY TO PLAY

The pair, who had been doubtful for today's All-Star Game, will turn out for Team LeBron

CHARLOTTE • Their participation in the All-Star Game had been in doubt, but New Orleans Pelicans centre Anthony Davis and Boston Celtics guard Kyrie Irving are ready to take to the court in this morning's (Singapore time) All-Star Game.

Declaring his intention to play in the spotlight game at the Spectrum Centre in Charlotte, North Carolina, Irving revealed the sprained

right knee, which has sidelined him for the past week, was not going to keep him from turning out for Team LeBron as a starter.

He said: "There's not too many chances you get to be around Kawhi Leonard, being around KD (Kevin Durant) and have a starting line-up like we do.

"That (injury) was on my mind, but it didn't factor going in to tak-

ing care of my health and making sure I'm good to play."

Celtics general manager Danny Ainge added that he had no issues with Irving declaring himself fit as he had "all the trust in him in his decisions on that".

He said: "I totally trust Kyrie that he will not play if he's not healthy. Like, he would only do it if he's 100 per cent healthy.

"Honestly, I don't really have any preference at all for what he does. I understand how he could actually benefit from having a really good workout."

Like Irving, Davis is adamant now is the "time to go play ball" for Team LeBron, despite suffering a shoulder strain last Thursday.

The big man has been the talk of the league the last few weeks since going public with his trade demand.

While no deal was struck by the trade deadline on Feb 7, with reports that Davis first wanted a deal only to the New York Knicks or the Los Angeles Lakers, before adding the Milwaukee Bucks and the Los Angeles Clippers to his preferred list of teams.

While it was widely assumed the 25-year-old did not want to go to Boston, he clarified the Celtics were "on my list", before insisting "all 29 other teams are on my list".

The six-time All-Star, who will be a reserve in the glamour match-up, told reporters: "I'm just keeping it real, to be honest. I knew that's all you guys wanted to talk about. I just stated how I feel, I stated my intentions and I go on from there.

"I just want to go to a team that wins."

But, after two weeks of his trade

request dominating conversation around the NBA, commissioner Adam Silver on Saturday sounded sanguine about any possible negative effects on the league.

"Trade demands are nothing new. Some of the greatest players in the history of this league have demanded trades at various points of their contracts," he said at his annual All-Star weekend address.

Although the frenzy of attention surrounding Davis and his possible destination this summer was not the type of "public spectacle" the NBA wanted, Silver admitted that there was "very little" he could do to completely stop players from trying to force trades.

He added: "We certainly are becoming a 52-week-a-year sport, and it's largely the result of tremendous interest in these players.

"We could do a better job as a league in avoiding those situations where they get to the point where players are maybe demanding they be traded or, worst-case scenario, saying, 'I'm not going to honour my contract'."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, NY TIMES



Team LeBron's Kyrie Irving and Kevin Durant during practice for the NBA All-Star Game at the Bojangles Coliseum. Irving said his sprained right knee, which had sidelined him earlier, was not going to keep him from playing on the same team as the Golden State forward. PHOTO: REUTERS

Owning a team more of an aspiration: LeBron

CHARLOTTE • Ahead of his 15th National Basketball Association (NBA) All-Star Game this morning (Singapore time), LeBron James revealed that owning an NBA team like basketball great and Charlotte Hornets owner Michael Jordan was "more of an aspiration" than a dream of his.

While the Los Angeles Lakers star once claimed there was "no maybe about it" when asked if he would be the majority owner of an NBA team one day, he was more

guarded this time.

The 34-year-old told reporters: "It would have to be the right fit. It would have to be the right city. It would have to be the right situation.

"See if it happens. If it don't, I won't be disappointed in anything I've done off the floor."

James, however, felt he had the pulling power to assemble the investors needed to purchase an NBA team, which Forbes magazine has valued at an average cost of US\$1.9 billion (\$\$2.5 billion).

He added: "I believe if I wanted to, I could own... or be part of a basketball team. I know I got so much knowledge of the game that I don't want to, once I stop playing, just to get away from the game.

"Obviously, I'm going to be along with my sons, because they're going to play the game. But, if I can give back to this league in any way shape or form, and continue to make this league as great as it is today, then I would love to."

However, the three-time NBA

champion insisted he had no plans to retire in the near future as he has "got a lot more games to play".

He said: "A ton more years to play this game and be in a Lakers uniform. Once we get to that point, we'll cross that path. Hopefully, I can sit here and answer questions as a player for a long time."

The four-time Most Valuable Player, who will captain his team against Team Giannis (Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks) in the annual talent showcase in Char-

lotte, North Carolina, also touched on how it would feel to pass Jordan on the all-time scoring list.

James, who ranks fifth on the list with 32,082 points while Jordan is fourth on 32,292, said: "One thing I can tell you is anytime I'm mentioned with one of the greats, if not the greatest that played this game, it's crazy to me.

"It really is. You talk about MJ, who I looked up to and always believed was the greatest."

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Sri Lanka hails Perera for heroic innings

COLOMBO • Kusal Perera became a national hero in Sri Lanka yesterday, after scoring an unbeaten career-best 153 to guide his country to only their second win in 14 Test matches in South Africa.

The country's cricket greats and politicians lauded the 28-year-old, who has become a linchpin for the ailing national side since fighting off doping charges.

Former Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardena tweeted: "What a beauty! One of the best innings under pressure" adding he had shown "intelligence and mental strength".

Perera and Vishwa Fernando put on an unbeaten 78 in a last-wicket partnership to gave Sri Lanka the upset victory.

Former skipper Kumar Sangakkara, who had staunchly defended Perera when he was suspended in December 2015, called



Sri Lanka's Kusal Perera raises his arms in celebration after his winning hit against hosts South Africa in their first Test. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

the one-wicket win at Kingsmead in Durban on Saturday as "unreal".

"What an amazing win," he tweeted. "One of the best if not the best overseas win by (Sri Lanka)."

The International Cricket Council lifted his ban in May 2016 and apologised for the botched testing. Sri Lankan President Maithripala

Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe also took to Twitter to hail the win.

"Congratulations to our cricket team on snatching a victory from the jaws of defeat," Mr Sirisena tweeted. "Kusal Janith Perera makes mother Sri Lanka very proud today! Keep fighting!"

Mr Wickremesinghe said: "Great spirit by @kusaljperera and all the youngsters #SAvSL" while Sports Minister Harin Fernando simply tweeted "U beauty".

Since winning the World Cup in 1996, Sri Lanka have been plagued by management scandals, corruption allegations and team in-fighting.

They were swept 3-0 in a home Test series against England last year before being beaten in Australia and New Zealand. The win, Sri Lanka's first in any format since October, ends South Africa's run of seven home series victories in a row, with the second and final Test in Port Elizabeth starting on Thursday. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS

SportsWorld

Real slump to shock LaLiga loss to Girona

MADRID • Real Madrid's resurgent LaLiga run skidded to a halt as they fell to a shock 2-1 home defeat by struggling Girona yesterday, leaving them nine points adrift of leaders Barcelona, who beat Real Valladolid 1-0 on Saturday.

Casemiro gave Real the lead midway through the first half but Girona, whose last league win was in November, equalised in the 65th minute with a Cristhian Stuani penalty before Cristian Portu scored the winner 10 minutes later. Real skipper Sergio Ramos earned a second yellow card in added time as he was sent off for the 25th time in his club career. REUTERS

Thomas holds slim lead at Riviera

LOS ANGELES • Justin Thomas eagled the first hole and took the sole lead early in the third round of the Genesis Open at Riviera Country Club on Saturday as Tiger Woods made a charge at a tournament he has never won.

American Thomas was on 13 under, one stroke ahead of Australian Adam Scott after two holes when play was suspended in fading light at the rain-hit tournament.

Woods picked up an eagle and three birdies in his first four holes to trail by seven strokes after seven holes. REUTERS

Hall of Famer 'Gene the Machine' dies

LOS ANGELES • Californian Gene Littler, a US Open champion and Hall of Fame golfer, has died at the age of 88, the PGA Tour announced on Saturday.

Littler, whose silky smooth swing earned him the nickname "Gene the Machine", won 29 PGA Tour events, as well as two in Japan. They included the 1961 US Open at Oakland Hills in Michigan. REUTERS

Mertens overcomes pain to win Qatar title

DOHA • Belgium's Elise Mertens claimed the biggest win of her career on Saturday, coming from a set down to beat world No. 3 Simona Halep and clinch the Qatar Open.

The world No. 21 won 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, despite being outclassed in the first set, overcoming an eight-minute medical time-out for back pain in the second set, and losing 18 consecutive points at one stage of the match.

Qatar is the fifth title of Mertens' career but notably her first at a Premier-level event. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WIN VIP tickets

Some of the world's best golfers will be in town and The Straits Times, in partnership with the HSBC Women's World Championship, is offering ST readers a chance to catch the action.

To earn a chance of winning a pair of VIP hospitality tickets worth \$2,400,

- Like the HSBC Women's World Championship Facebook page and
- Answer the following question correctly.

Q: On which course will the HSBC Women's World Championship be played?

E-mail your answers (subject header: HSBC Women's World Championship 2019), together with your name, IC and contact number to admin@roccomms.com by Wednesday, Feb 20, 8am.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- Passes are not exchangeable.
- By entering this contest, you agree to share data (including personal data) with organisers solely for the purposes of this contest.
- The organisers' decision is final.
- Employees of Roco Communications and Singapore Press Holdings are not eligible to enter this contest.
- Passes to the tournament are valid only for admission to the New Tanjong

Course at the Sentosa Golf Club and such other designated area(s) (the "Venue") on the date(s) as shown. The Sentosa Island admission fee and vehicle fee shall still apply. Passes must be produced at appropriate entry points and/or on demand by any authorised official. Pass holders shall display their passes at all times while they are at the venue.

- All passes are personal to the holders and are strictly non-transferable.

SPORT

MIND OVER BODY, AND AGE JUST A NUMBER

Singaporean Lau, 67, is oldest woman to finish 7 marathons in 7 continents over 7 days

Laura Chia

Growing up, property developer Gloria Lau was not a sports enthusiast. She had no sporting background and had never participated in sports activities.

But all that changed in 2007 when her doctor warned her that her low bone density could lead to osteoporosis and recommended that she take up running to increase her bone density.

She then started running regularly, beginning with 2km runs and increasing the distance over time.

After seven months, she took part in her first marathon, the Perth Marathon, and she has not looked back since.

On Feb 6, the 67-year-old Singaporean became the oldest woman to complete the prestigious World Marathon Challenge where she ran seven marathons in seven continents in seven days in a time of 50hr 30min 58sec.

Briton Susannah Gill clocked 24:19:09 to win the women's title, setting a fastest average marathon record of 3:28:09, almost 30 minutes faster than the previous mark of 3:55:11 set by American Becca Pizzi in 2016.

Even though Lau finished last among 36 runners – 23 men and 13 women – with an average time of 7hr 13min per marathon, she is “over the moon” that she finished all the races.

“My biggest fear was not finishing. I knew I was going to be last, but it was more important to me that I finished,” said Lau, who has run 32 marathons since 2007.

To meet the cut-off time of eight hours for each marathon, Lau barely stopped, minimising her toilet breaks and opting to eat bananas and run at the same time.

“If you stop to rest, you lose momentum and every minute counted for me,” she said.



Lau had been training for the World Marathon Challenge since last year, but she signed up only one week before the marathons started on Jan 31 in Antarctica after encouragement from event director Richard Donovan.

“It was now or never,” said Lau, who had already been running an average of 70km a week.

After Antarctica, she ran one marathon a day in Cape Town, Perth, Dubai, Madrid, Santiago and Miami.

For the mother of two, the most challenging part was not the sub-zero temperatures in Antarctica or the extreme heat in Cape Town.

It was battling fatigue which took its toll on her in the fifth leg in Madrid.

“As I finished last (in most of the races), I had very little time for recovery.

In Madrid, I struggled to keep awake and was thoroughly exhausted. I couldn't even run straight,” she said.

“But it all comes down to how mentally tough you are. I splashed water on myself, kept talking and shouting to myself so that I wouldn't fall asleep.

“I told myself, ‘Look, you don't want to do this again. You'll feel great when this is over. You can do it.’”

Lau recalled how she was inspired by words of encouragement from the other runners running past her.

American Michael Wardian, who won the men's title by completing seven marathons in 20:49:30, even lent Lau his jacket in Madrid when it became extremely cold and windy.

Besides the extreme weather conditions, Lau also had to battle pain in her right hip and blisters on both feet.

“I didn't think about the pain. When you're running like this, you feel numb to the pain because you think only of finishing,” she added.

Lau hopes that her own story will encourage people of all ages to take up running.

“If I can do it, anyone can do it, too. It's never too late to start. Running is the cheapest form of exercise and it's good for overall health,” she said.

“People always tell me to be careful and take care of my knees while running but I've never felt better.

“Running is very therapeutic and I feel like I'm in my own world.”

claura@sph.com.sg

Even though she finished last among 36 runners, 67-year-old Gloria Lau is elated that she completed all the seven races in the World Marathon Challenge. She has run 32 marathons since 2007, when a doctor's advice set her on the road to the gruelling races. ST PHOTO: KHALID BABA

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL CHALLENGE

But it all comes down to how mentally tough you are. I splashed water on myself, kept talking and shouting to myself so that I wouldn't fall asleep.



GLORIA LAU, World Marathon Challenge finisher, on how she battled fatigue, which took its toll on her in the fifth leg in Madrid.

Nelly completes ‘Korda Slam’ with win

ADELAIDE • Nelly Korda added to an amazing family tradition of winning top titles Down Under by claiming the LPGA Australian Open by two shots in Adelaide and celebrating with a scissors kick yesterday.

The 20-year-old American carded a five-under 67 in the final round at the Grange Golf Club for a 17-under 271 total to hold off South Korean challenger Ko Jin-young (64).

With her win, the world No. 16 joined her father, sister and brother in being crowned an Open champion on Australian soil.

Her dad, Petr, got the ball rolling

by beating Chile's Marcelo Rios in the 1998 Australian Open men's singles final for his first and only Grand Slam tennis title. He celebrated with his trademark scissors kick.

Nelly's sister, Jessica, then won the Australian Open golf in 2012, duplicating her father's celebration, as did brother Sebastian when he claimed the Australian Open tennis boys' title last year.

Not to be undone, Nelly also nailed the “Korda Kick” after her victory.

Just minutes after tapping in a par putt at the 18th hole, she was handed a phone and her elder sister

was looking at her through Facetime.

Nelly put it in context, saying: “I'm finally a part of the club. She was pretty much screaming, ‘Congratulations!’, she was so happy for me. I mean this win was really special for my family.

“I think there's something in the air here, we love coming Down Under.

“I just got off the phone with my dad and he said, ‘Well, congratulations, you're part of the Korda Slam now.’”

Korda was the overnight leader and held her nerve despite a bogey on the 15th to beat Ko by two

strokes and Taiwan's Hsu Wei-ling by five. Thailand's world No. 1 Ariya Jutanugarn (69) finished 15 adrift.

Korda has been the form player of recent months, and has now scored two wins and two other top three-finishes in her last five events.

She arrived in Adelaide on the back of her first LPGA Tour victory at the Taiwan Championship in October last year, before a second-placed finish at the Tour Championship in Florida.

She started her 2019 campaign in a similar vein, finishing third at the Tournament of Champions last month, also in Florida.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



American golfer Nelly Korda celebrates winning the LPGA Australian Open in Adelaide yesterday with a trademark scissors kick – a family tradition first started by her father, Petr, when he won his first Grand Slam tennis title at the 1998 Australian Open. PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A Game of Two Halves

Sazali Abdul Aziz and David Lee discuss the future of under-pressure Maurizio Sarri and the impact of young football coaches in Singapore: <http://str.sg/oEgC>



Next 48 Hours

TODAY

FOOTBALL

English FA Cup 5th rd: Chelsea v Manchester United (Singtel TV Ch111, tomorrow, 3.25am).

Spanish LaLiga Huesca v Athletic (StarHub Ch213, tomorrow, 4am).

MIXED MARTIAL ARTS

UFC Fight Night Ngannou v Velasquez (Singtel TV Ch114 & StarHub Ch208, 10am).

TENNIS

ATP Rio Open Day 1 (StarHub Ch201, tomorrow, 3.30am).

TOMORROW

FOOTBALL

AFC Champions League Shandong v Hanoi (Singtel TV Ch114 & StarHub Ch208, 3.20pm), Kashima v Newcastle (Ch115 & Ch209, 5.50pm), Ulsan v Perak (Ch114 & Ch208, 6.20pm).

Uefa Champions League Last 16, 1st

leg: Lyon v Barcelona (StarHub Ch213), Liverpool v Bayern (Singtel TV Ch110) – Wednesday, 3.55am.

TENNIS

ATP Rio Open Day 2 (StarHub Ch201, Wednesday, 3.30am).

For latest updates, go to singtelv.com.sg & starhubgo.com or check the on-screen TV guide.

life

D IS THAT NICOLE KIDMAN? Shocking makeover for new film
D5



Hawker Culture is a big part of my life as my family is in the hawker trade. The Hawker Culture in Singapore deserves to be preserved and recognised.

Wong Kan Foo, 57

Pledge your support for Singapore's Hawker Culture at www.oursgheritage.sg



Avoiding triggers and leading a healthy lifestyle, including having regular exercise, can help to prevent migraines. PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO

My head's going to explode

A new class of drugs designed to treat migraines is now available



Joyce Teo

A migraine can cause such severe pain that some people feel like they want to rip their heads off.

As if the pain is not enough, to cripple you for several hours, or even days for some, you may also feel dizzy and nauseous.

In short, a bad migraine attack can be sheer torture.

More than a headache, a migraine is a common and recurrent neurological disorder characterised by debilitating aches, which are often accompanied by a wide array of symptoms such as disturbed vision; sensitivity to light, sound and smells; and feeling sick.

It mostly affects those aged between 35 and 45, and women are more prone than men.

The Migraine Trust, a London-based charity, said the affliction is the third most common disease in the world behind dental caries and tension-type headaches with an estimated global prevalence of 14.7 per cent.

There has been an increase of about 10 per cent in new patient numbers since 2016 at the outpatient referral clinic for headache disorders at National University Hospital (NUH).

The clinic sees about 100 new patients a month, said Dr Jonathan Jia Yuan Ong, president of the Headache Society of Singapore and a consultant at the division of neurology at NUH.

Many more do not seek help. Migraine is generally believed to be under-diagnosed and undertreated as it is commonly seen as just another headache, though it is anything but that, said Dr Ong.

"Migraine attacks are often very disabling and may result in one having to lie still for several hours," he noted.

These attacks usually last from four to 72 hours, he added.

When attacks occur, patients may take paracetamol and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to relieve the pain.

Triptans, which were designed to treat migraine attacks when they occur, emerged in the 1990s.

There are also medications that migraineurs – as sufferers are

known – can take to reduce the severity or frequency of their migraines.

Such preventive medications include anti-depressants and anti-convulsants, which are drugs that are also used to treat other conditions.

NEW MIGRAINE TREATMENT

It was not until last year that a new class of drugs designed specifically to treat the condition was released.

These monoclonal antibody-based treatments help to prevent migraine by interfering with calcitonin gene-related peptide (CGRP), the protein known for causing migraine.

When CGRP is released, it causes an intense inflammation affecting the coverings of the brain. For most migraine patients, this process leads to the pain of a migraine attack, said Dr Ong.

Erenumab (commercially known as Aimovig) was the first of such drugs to be approved for use by the United States Food & Drug Administration (FDA) last May.

In Singapore, the Health Sciences Authority approved erenumab late last year. This is a prescription drug that patients here can obtain from their doctors.

Since the approval of erenumab, the FDA in the US has approved two other monoclonal antibody treatments for migraines – fre-

manezumab (Ajovy) and galcanezumab (Emgality).

A fourth drug in the same class – eptinezumab – is now in the third phase of clinical trials.

Experts have called these treatments, which have been decades in the making, groundbreaking.

Dr Stephen Silberstein, director of the Headache Center at Jefferson Health in Philadelphia, told The Washington Post at the end of last year: "There is a revolution in migraine."

Indeed, Dr Charles Siow, a neurologist at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital, said: "The clinical studies of this medication have been quite impressive, with a higher response rate than many other migraine preventive medications."

The cost of the drugs can be an issue, however.

Erenumab's list price in the US was reported as US\$6,900 (S\$9,368) a year.

Dr Siow said: "It is quite expensive at about \$900 a month, but its side effects are mild, including flu-like symptoms, aching and so on."

"It is therefore very well tolerated, but the downside is that it has to be given as an injection."

Erenumab, the first new migraine treatment approved here, is given monthly by self-injection.

"For these reasons, it will appeal to a segment of the migraine population in Singapore who value good

efficacy and low side effects of their medications."

If patients use erenumab to prevent or reduce their migraine attacks, they do not have to take oral medications daily, he said.

The drug also appears effective for patients with more severe migraines, who suffer from chronic attacks, added Dr Siow.

MORE THAN MEDICATION

Medication is not the only way to treat migraines.

Botox injections are also effective in treating chronic migraine and biofeedback, when learnt and practised, can be an effective therapy as well, said Dr Siow.

Biofeedback is a non-drug treatment that involves using visual or auditory feedback to gain control over involuntary bodily functions.

Avoiding triggers and leading a healthy lifestyle, including having regular exercise, are as important as medications, said Dr Ong.

Many migraineurs may still think that there is no treatment for their headaches, said Dr Siow.

They are "not aware that with the (array) of medications we have now, we can effectively reduce or even stop migraines".

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WHAT TRIGGERS YOUR MIGRAINES?
on D2

FROM D1

What triggers your migraines?

Joyce Teo

Almost anything can trigger a migraine attack in a person pre-disposed to the condition.

A trigger may not cause an attack every time so patients can keep a detailed diary of the events before and during an incident, said Dr Jonathan Jia Yuan Ong, president of the Headache Society of Singapore and a consultant at the division of neurology at National University Hospital.

These include the onset of headaches, associated symptoms such as nausea or neck aches, the frequency and duration of an attack, the location and nature of the pain, any treatment taken and its effectiveness as well as trigger factors.

Dr Ong said it helps to record as many aspects of your daily life as possible, such as what and when you ate, how much sleep you had, the exercise you did, your social and work activities, the effect of the weather on your headaches and, for women, the details of their menstrual cycle.

A migraine attack can be triggered by various factors up to 48 hours before the headache comes on, but, in particular, take note of events six to eight hours before the attack.

He noted these common migraine triggers:

Changes in routine: Some people find that altering their routine – such as changing sleep patterns – can trigger a migraine. Even pleasant changes in routine such as taking a holiday can be implicated.

Some migraineurs suffer from migraines only during the weekend, when there may be changes to their daily routine such as eating their meals at a later time.

Stress: This is strongly linked to migraines. Anxiety, excitement and any form of tension may lead to an attack.



Using a computer for long periods or excessive consumption of caffeine can lead to a migraine attack. PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO

However, some people have reported that their migraine attacks start only when the stress is reduced. This is sometimes experienced as a “weekend headache” when, after a stressful week at work, an individual might get a migraine at the end of the week when he is more relaxed.

Sleep: Too much or too little sleep can lead to a migraine. Sleepless nights, keeping late nights and being over-tired can also be triggers.

Caffeine: Excessive consumption of caffeine may contribute to the

onset of a migraine attack.

Limit the intake of caffeinated drinks to not more than four or five cups of tea, coffee or cola a day.

Some migraineurs found that their attacks were triggered by a sudden and complete halt in caffeine intake. If you suspect this, gradually cut down on caffeine.

Hormonal changes in women: Fluctuations in oestrogen can trigger headaches in women. This may explain why more women than men experience migraines.

Some women have experienced

migraines since puberty and found that their migraines are linked to their menstrual cycles.

Menopause is often the most difficult time for women suffering from migraine due to fluctuating hormonal levels.

Others have an increased tendency to develop migraines during pregnancy or menopause.

The environment: The factors that can provoke a migraine attack are variable and affect only a small proportion of migraineurs. Commonly reported environmental triggers include bright or flickering lights, loud sounds and intense odours or smells (including from cigarette smoke).

During a migraine attack, sufferers experience a heightened sensitivity to these sensory stimuli, some of which can be as uncomfortable as the pain.

Computer screens: Using a computer for long periods of time can cause problems for a migraineur. Taking regular breaks, using anti-glare screens and having good lighting can help prevent this.

If you use a computer a lot at work, make sure you have a comfortable space. This is so that you can avoid muscle tension building up in the head, neck and shoulders. This muscle tension is implicated in the onset of migraine.

Food: Food-related triggers occur in about 10 per cent of migraineurs.

Many of them crave sweet food items such as chocolate before the

start of a migraine, leading them to conclude that the sweet food is a cause. However, the craving itself can signal the start of the migraine.

There is some evidence red wine may trigger a migraine because it contains tyramine, which has been linked to migraine. Tyramine is also found in other food products such as soft cheeses.

Other foods that may trigger an attack include processed foods, which contain nitrates; fizzy drinks, which may contain the artificial sweetener aspartame; and food that has monosodium glutamate or MSG.

Hunger: Missing meals or eating sugary snacks instead of a balanced meal can contribute to a migraine attack.

Insufficient food is probably one of the most important dietary triggers. Eating small snacks at regular intervals can help.

Dehydration: Avoid this by consuming at least eight glasses of water a day.

Exercise: Like sleep, exercise can help to prevent migraine or trigger it.

Regular exercise which is built up gradually can help prevent migraine. This also stimulates the body to release its own natural painkillers as well as improves the individual's sense of well-being and general health.

But sudden vigorous exercise, particularly for people who do not usually exercise, can be a trigger factor.

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Scientists discover chemical that stops replication of viruses

HONG KONG • Hong Kong scientists claim they have made a potential breakthrough discovery in the fight against infectious diseases – a chemical that could slow the spread of deadly viral illnesses.

A team from the University of Hong Kong (HKU) described the newly discovered chemical as “highly potent in interrupting the life cycle of diverse viruses” in a study published last month in the journal Nature Communications.

The scientists said it could one day be used as a broad-spectrum antiviral for a host of infectious diseases – and even for viruses that have yet to emerge – if it passes clinical trials.

The spread in recent decades of sometimes deadly bird flu strains, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (Mers) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (Sars) has underscored the need for new drugs that can work more quickly than vaccines.

Broad-spectrum antivirals are seen as the holy grail because they can be used against multiple pathogens. In contrast, vaccines usually protect against only one strain, and by the time they are produced, the virus may have mutated.

The HKU team tested its chemical, AM580, on mice in a two-year

study and found it stopped the replication of a host of flu strains – including H1N1, H5N1 and H7N9 – as well as the viruses that cause Sars and Mers.

It also stopped the replication of the mosquito-borne Zika virus and Enterovirus 71, which causes hand, foot and mouth disease.

Microbiologist Yuen Kwok Yung, who led the team, said: “This is what we call a broad-spectrum antiviral drug, which means it can kill a number of viruses.

“This is quite important in the early control of an epidemic.”

The study is part of a growing body of research by virologists to find drugs that avoid targeting a virus directly – something which could lead to resistance.

Instead, they look for compounds that interrupt the way viruses use crucial fatty acids, known as lipids, within a host's cells to replicate.

Dr Benjamin Neuman, an expert on viruses at Texas A&M University-Texarkana who has published his own studies on starving viruses of lipids, said: “This study is science in progress – an early step in an exciting new direction.

“Viruses are totally dependent on supplies stolen from their hosts, and a number of recent studies have shown that treatments that in-

terrupt the steady flow of lipids in an infected cell are highly effective at blocking a wide range of viruses.”

The next step is to test the drug on a wider variety of animals, including pigs and primates, before pushing to clinical trials, a process Professor Yuen said could take up to eight years.

The HKU team has applied for a patent in the United States.

A derivative of AM580 is already being used in Japan to treat cancer, raising hopes that it will show low toxicity for humans.

But Dr Neuman warns there are drawbacks.

Like many chemotherapy methods used to fight cancer, antivirals such as AM580 damage a person's cells to starve a virus. While cells can heal, much research still needs to be done on how and when to use such techniques.

He added: “Unless the treatment is targeted very carefully, the potential for side effects would be very worrying.”

Densely populated Hong Kong has first-hand experience of deadly viral outbreaks.

In 2003, nearly 300 people died from Sars and the city's densely packed apartment blocks are considered hugely vulnerable to future outbreaks. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

DocTalk

Pain in the face? Don't just bear with it

A combination of treatments, such as medication, and changes to lifestyle can prevent facial pain from affecting one's quality of life



Diana Chan

For a year, until about six months ago, Madam Ang (not her real name), 45, put up with severe intermittent pain in her left cheek and jaw.

She would have pain attacks on the same spots that came on like an electric shock every hour, lasting for about five minutes each time. The pain worsened when she touched her face, brushed her teeth, chewed on her food or talked.

Madam Ang suffers from a condition called trigeminal neuralgia, which occurs when the trigeminal nerve – responsible for facial sensations – is affected or injured.

This debilitating condition is one of the most common causes of facial pain and affects about one in 200,000 people worldwide.

Every year, we see just over 50 new cases at the Singapore General Hospital (SGH) Pain Management Centre.

Like Madam Ang, people with this condition experience excruciating pain that affects their sleep and work. The pain can be so intolerable that they become depressed and entertain thoughts of suicide.

Facial pain can be due to diseased teeth or gums, the burning mouth syndrome where patients feel a recurring burning sensation in the mouth or postherpetic neuralgia where a facial nerve is affected after a shingles attack.

Other possible causes of facial pain are a brain tumour or a neurological condition known as multiple sclerosis.

Madam Ang initially thought she had a toothache. But the pain persisted even after a detailed dental examination found that nothing was wrong.

Painkillers did not help and the dentists subsequently referred her to SGH's Pain Management Centre.

When I first saw her at the centre, I could not examine her face as she felt pain even when lightly touched. She had lost a lot of weight as eating made the pain worse.

She also slept poorly and was

depressed. Worse, she had to quit her sales job because she could not speak for long without experiencing terrible pain. Her facial pain adversely affected her livelihood and quality of life.

We sent her for a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan.

The scans for about 30 per cent of the patients with facial pain show a blood vessel compressing the trigeminal nerve. For the remaining 70 per cent, the cause of the pain is usually unknown, as the MRI scan results would be normal.

Although Madam Ang's MRI scan was normal, the symptoms she was experiencing pointed to trigeminal neuralgia.

I discussed with her the possible treatment options. Most patients are usually treated with an anticonvulsant medication such as carbamazepine.

However, some patients may be allergic to carbamazepine and they would usually need to take a blood test to check if the medication is suitable for them.

Otherwise, doctors may consider other anticonvulsants or antidepressants.

As Madam Ang showed signs of depression, she was also referred to a psychiatrist and a psychologist for counselling and stress management.

Research has shown that when

patients are stressed or anxious, pain therapy may not be effective.

Instead, an approach that includes medicine to treat the biological causes, psychotherapy to address the emotional aspect as well as lifestyle and social environment changes, is usually adopted when managing patients with pain.

Acupuncture to complement Madam Ang's care plan was also recommended as studies have shown that patients with this condition can benefit from a combination of both treatments.

Since 2003, the World Health Organisation has recognised acupuncture as a useful treatment for certain conditions, including pain syndromes such as trigeminal neuralgia.

In our experience, too, combining medication with acupuncture improves the treatment outcome for trigeminal neuralgia.

Fortunately, Madam Ang's condition improved after such combination treatment.

Had these conservative treatments not worked, invasive or surgical treatment would have been considered.

If the trigeminal nerve is compressed by a blood vessel, an operation to separate the nerves will be done. If there is no nerve compression, microsurgery to remove the trigeminal nerve can be considered.

A small number of patients with facial pain develop weakness in the jaw muscle, with less than 1 per cent experiencing a slight burning sensation after the procedure.

The success rate of surgery is about 98 per cent, although the pain recurs after a year in 20 per cent of patients.

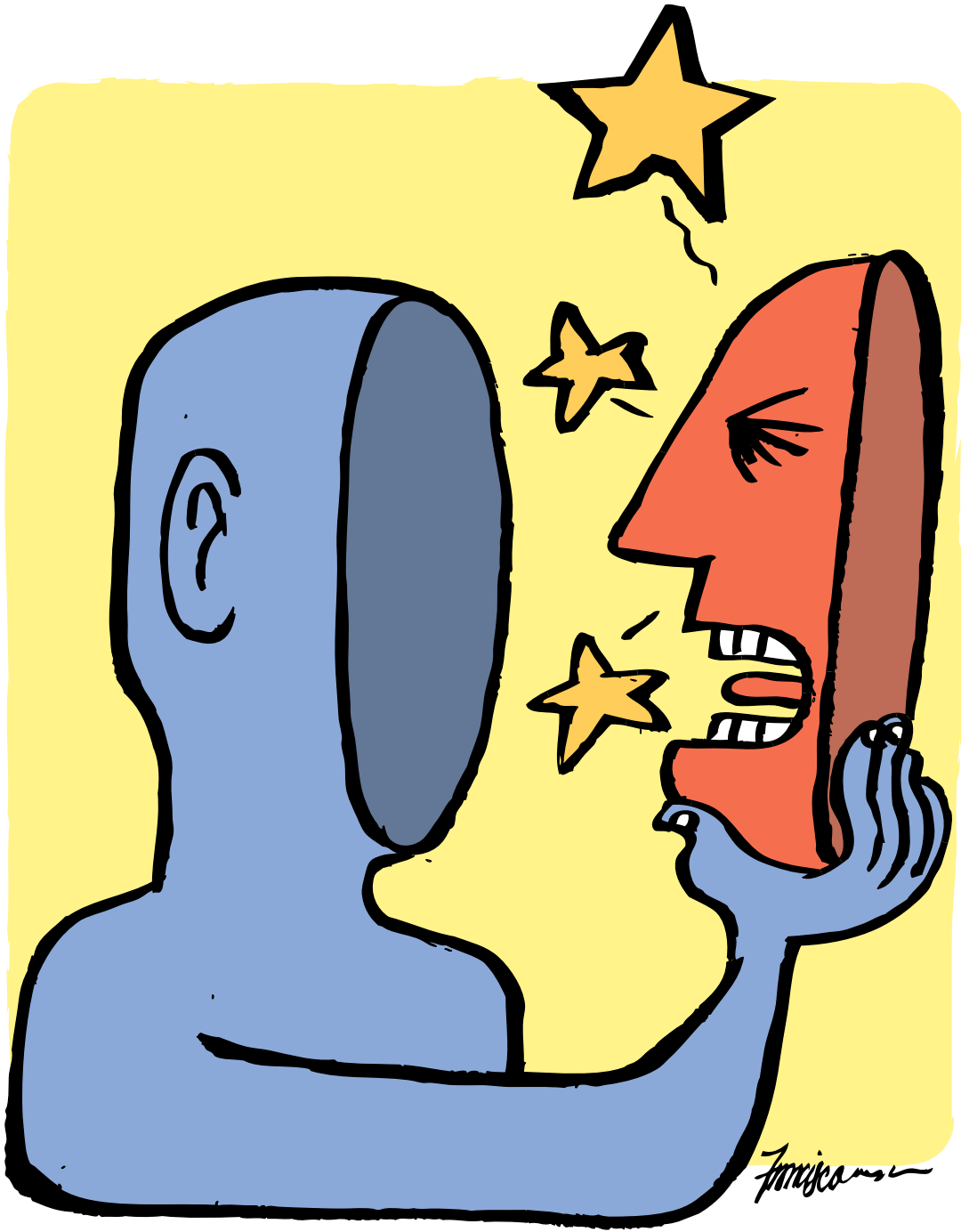
When I saw Madam Ang a month after her treatment, her pain was less severe and she had fewer episodes of stabbing pain.

After six months of the combination treatment, together with psychotherapy sessions, her facial pain lessened considerably, to the point that she was able to return to work as an administrative assistant. She was also happier and able to eat more and sleep better at night.

We then lowered her medication doses and she now needs to see me just once a year for a review of her condition.

mysgh@sgh.com.sg

• Dr Diana Chan is a consultant at the department of pain medicine at the Singapore General Hospital.



New treatment to help men regain healthy sex lives

NEW YORK • Sometimes, it takes the licensing and advertising of a treatment to get patients to seek help, even for a medical problem that is often painful and psychologically devastating.

Such is the case with Peyronie's disease, a scarring and bending or curving of the penis that can make sexual intercourse difficult or impossible for men.

It most often afflicts middle-aged men, usually the result of an injury that may not have been noticed. Injury can occur during a sports activity, accident or sex when the erect penis is bent or pounded against bone.

In repairing the damage, the body creates plaques of scar tissue under the skin of the penis, causing it to bend or curve abnormally or become indented when erect.

Before the end of 2014, when the United States Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approved an injectable drug called Xiaflex, there was no approved treatment for Peyronie's.

Xiaflex contains an enzyme, collagenase, that in four cycles of treatment is injected directly into the plaque to destroy it and reduce the curvature.

Researchers estimate that anywhere from 1 to 23 per cent of men between the ages of 40 and 70 are affected, although the actual number may be higher, given that embarrassment keeps many men from seeking medical help.

More than three-quarters of those affected are depressed and stressed by the problem.

Dr Jesse N. Mills, director of the Men's Clinic at the University of California, Los Angeles, said: "For the most part, men suffer in silence."

Given his urological speciality, Dr Mills said he sees about 20 new patients a week with Peyronie's, many of whom seek help after seeing advertisements for Xiaflex online.

"I don't think the incidence has changed in the last 500 years, but

more men are realising there may be an effective treatment, though we still lack a celebrity patient who will do for Peyronie's what (one-time presidential candidate) Bob Dole did for erectile dysfunction," the urologist said.

Heredity and certain connective tissue disorders like Dupuytren's contractures increase the risk of developing Peyronie's. Elevated blood sugar, smoking and pelvic trauma also increase the risk.

The disease can develop gradually or come on suddenly.

But Dr Mills said: "Xiaflex is not a miracle drug. The trial that led to

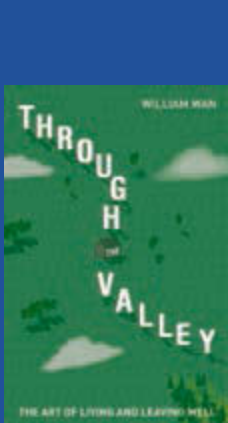
FDA approval saw a 35 per cent improvement in curvature, although we're seeing about a 50 per cent decrease.

"I tell patients, 'You're never going to get back the penis you had, but you can get a functional penis,' which is what most men want."

Only rarely does the problem correct itself without treatment and severe cases that do not respond adequately to injections may be treated surgically.

Dr Mills emphasised that although there is still no sure cure for Peyronie's disease, therapy often lessens the problem. NYTIMES

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He will be joined by The Straits Times Senior Writer Lee Siew Hua.



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* <https://www.todayonline.com/daily-focus/health/young-children-myopia-get-it-worse-later-life-Singapore-study>

sweetspot
Partner Content

By ARUL JOHN

Strategic work breaks help refresh our brains and see situations in new ways.
When you take a short work break, the prefrontal cortex (PFC), the thinking part of your brain, is able to better focus on your goals and breaks help you override any impulsive actions that may arise.
Take note of this summary of recent research and thinking on the value of taking breaks:
Movement breaks
Constant sitting puts you at higher risk of heart disease, diabetes, depression, and obesity.
Getting up from your chair to walk, stretch, do yoga, or whatever activity you prefer can

reduce the negative health effects from too much sitting. Just a 5-minute walkabout break every hour can improve your health and well-being.
Prevention of 'decision fatigue'
The need to make frequent decisions throughout the working day can wear down your willpower and reasoning ability. Frequent breaks can reduce instances of simplistic decision-making and procrastination.
Restoration of motivation
Breaks restore motivation, especially for long-term goals, and also improve work performance, compared to long periods of prolonged attention to a task.

Increase of productivity and creativity
Working for long stretches without breaks leads to stress and exhaustion. Taking breaks refreshes the mind, replenishes your mental resources, and helps you become more creative.
Research suggests also that taking regular breaks raises workers' level of engagement which, in turn, is highly correlated with productivity.
Consolidation of memories
Scientists have known for some time that one purpose of sleep is to consolidate memories. However, there is also evidence that resting while awake likewise improves memory formation.
During a rest period it appears that the brain

reviews and ingrains what it previously learned.
But also take note that there are moments when taking breaks may be counterproductive, e.g. when you are in a state of "flow." - characterized by complete absorption in the task, seemingly effortless concentration, and pleasure in the task itself.
Enjoying what you are doing may be a sign that you still have plenty of energy for your current activity.

This article provides general information only and is not a substitute for medical advice. Please consult medical or healthcare professionals for advice on health-related matters.



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Why Kidman wanted to play cop on the skids

The actress wants to ‘explore emotional territory’ and also support the female director of *Destroyer*



Alison de Souza
In Los Angeles

In the crime thriller *Destroyer*, Nicole Kidman is almost unrecognisable in her role as a Los Angeles police detective, Erin Bell, whose face shows the ravages of both alcoholism and guilt over an old case that still haunts her.

This is not the first time the award-winning Australian star has physically transformed herself for a character, of course.

Putting on a prosthetic nose helped her take home the Best Actress Academy Award for the drama *The Hours* (2002), where she played tortured writer Virginia Woolf.

Speaking last month at a Los Angeles screening of her new film, the 51-year-old says she is drawn to parts that take her somewhere new psychologically.

And Kidman also reveals that she wanted to support the film’s female director, Karyn Kusama.

“It’s not about trying to find really different roles as much as it’s about

exploring emotional territory that I’ve never been to before,” says Kidman, who picked up a Golden Globe Best Actress nomination for the film earlier this year.

“I’m also always interested in examining human nature and the human psyche,” she adds.

In order to do that, she feels the need to “not be trapped by my own physicality and wanting to always say I’m willing to morph into whatever is needed to play the role”.

With this film, that meant playing an embittered woman who has a fraught, heartbreaking relationship with her teenage daughter, played by Jade Pettyjohn.

Kidman, who has two daughters aged eight and 10 with 51-year-old husband Keith Urban, an Australian country singer, says: “I was emotionally really shattered by it.” She also has an adopted son, 24, and daughter, 26, with ex-husband and actor Tom Cruise, 56.

She says: “I think the scenes of the mother and daughter were the ones that grabbed me, particularly that final image where I’m carrying my daughter on my back through the

snow. The way that was written in the screenplay – it was so simple, but it really was powerful.”

The unusual structure of the narrative was something she could sink her teeth into as well, although it meant multiple close readings of the script. “I had to go back and kind of piece together all of it because the way it was constructed was complicated,” she adds.

She is curious to see when audiences figure out the twists and turns in the tale.

I’m also always interested in examining human nature and the human psyche.



NICOLE KIDMAN, on not wanting to be trapped by her own physicality and playing an embittered woman who has a fraught, heartbreaking relationship with her teenage daughter in *Destroyer*

“It’s interesting to see whether people see all the little details because this is sparse in a lot of its dialogue and even in the flashbacks. But there’s so much information in the flashbacks,” she says.

Kidman’s star has grown even brighter in recent years – her critically acclaimed turn in the television drama *Big Little Lies* (2017) won her the Outstanding Lead Actress Emmy, and last year’s superhero hit *Aquaman*, in which she played Queen Atlanna, was her highest-grossing film to date.

But she wants to use that star power to support “different genres and female directors” when she can and that is a big part of why she took on *Destroyer*, a low-budget indie directed by Kusama, a Japanese-American woman and a relatively obscure name.

Kidman says she is all too aware that women account for just a handful of film-makers in Hollywood – only 8 per cent of the top 250 movies in the United States last year were directed by women, down from 11 per cent the year before.

Then there was Kusama’s drive to

see the project through. The 50-year-old director’s breakout hit was the indie drama *Girlfight* (2000).

Kidman, who has worked with legendary film-makers such as Stanley Kubrick (*Eyes Wide Shut*, 1999), says: “The first thing I notice is the passion of the director. So if the director is completely consumed and passionate, he or she is my kind of director.”

Kidman says of Kusama: “Her determination, desire and desperation to get this film made – because it was very hard to get it financed and made – comes from being a woman who hasn’t had the same opportunities as a lot of her male colleagues. And that’s fantastic because it’s palpable.”

Kidman adds: “There were a lot of situations in the making of this film where she was like, ‘Give me the chance.’ Being able to help a director have a chance is a fantastic thing as an actor. I’m very proud that she got it made and that I was able to be in it.”

stlife@sph.com.sg

• *Destroyer* is showing in cinemas.

In her role as a police detective in *Destroyer*, Nicole Kidman is almost unrecognisable – with a face that shows the ravages of both alcoholism and guilt over an old case that still haunts her.

PHOTO: SHAW ORGANISATION

Entering the groovy headspace of Khalil Fong

REVIEW / CONCERT

HUAYI 2019: KHALIL FONG TIO CONCERT TOUR
Esplanade Concert Hall/Last Saturday

Benson Ang

Hong Kong singer-songwriter Khalil Fong is introverted and awkward at banter, and admits to being “quiet” at his latest show here.

Explaining why he wore a loud jacket with bold red, orange and



Khalil Fong sang familiar favourites mixed with some new material at his nearly two-hour concert. PHOTO: ESPLANADE – THEATRES ON THE BAY

blue patches, he said: “I am more of a quiet person. So I wore something not-so-quiet to balance it out.”

More expressive through song, the 35-year-old sang familiar favourites mixed with some new material at the nearly two-hour concert.

Opening with the catchy Wu Kong, he mostly let his music speak for itself.

A check three hours before the show revealed several rows of unsold tickets, but those who turned up got a delightful peek into Fong’s world – a fusion of Asian and West-

ern influences, with elements of soul, funk and jazz.

He is often lauded for his unconventional approach to Chinese music.

Clutching the microphone with his right hand, his left hand was often animated and expressive – miming playing a keyboard and spinning turntables – as he got into the groovy headspace of many of his earlier hits, such as *Spring Breeze* and *Everyday* from his 2005 debut album *Soulboy*, as well as *Love Song* and *Park* from his 2007

third album *Wonderland*.

In terms of newer material, there was last year’s inspiring number *Throw It Off*, which the concert, TIO, is titled after.

He also performed *The Tree Of Life*, a soothing song released last year for the Emi *The Dream Catcher* series of graphic novels for children, effortlessly switching between the English and Mandarin lyrics.

But it was a pity he did not perform the hauntingly hypnotic track of his new single *Fake Monk*, which is on the charts this month.

Among the highlights were his duets with guest stars – Holland-born singer Diana Wang on the cheery *Dear Ocean* and Singapore singer-songwriter Charlie Lim on the gloomy *Ain’t No Sunshine*.

The collaboration with Lim – who has been said to be the Singapore version of Fong – was particularly apt. Seeing the bespectacled musicians on the same stage, playing the same type of guitar, and hearing Fong’s soulful pipes coupled with Lim’s sonorous voice, was unforgettable.

For a self-proclaimed quiet guy, Fong’s music speaks volumes.

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Dirty John stars Connie Britton (fifth from far left) as a wealthy interior designer who was cheated by a con artist played by Eric Bana (sixth from far left). PHOTO: NETFLIX

A gamble on a real-life tale

The stars and creator of Dirty John, about a woman duped by a con man, believe the events can happen to anyone

Alison de Souza
In Los Angeles

It is the ultimate dating horror story: A woman meets the perfect man – a handsome doctor – who sweeps her off her feet. But he unleashes a nightmare that nearly destroys her and her family.

This is the plot of Dirty John, a true-crime anthology series that debuted on Netflix last week.

But if you think you could never be fooled like this woman, the show might change your mind, its stars and creator say.

Based on a true story – the subject of a hit 2017 podcast of the same name co-produced by the Los Angeles Times – it dramatises the web of lies and manipulation that ensnare a wealthy Southern Californian interior designer named Debra Newell, played by Connie Britton.

After four failed marriages, Newell turns to an Internet dating site for singles aged 50 and older.

In 2014, she meets a charming man named John Meehan (Eric Bana), who tells her he is an anaes-

thesiologist. She believes him – partly because he is always dressed in surgical scrubs – but he turns out to be a con artist and a dangerous sociopath.

The two actors chatted with The Straits Times and other press during a tour of the show's set in Los Angeles late last year.

Britton, 51, says she spent a good deal of time with the real Newell while preparing for the role.

The American actress was able to quiz her about what happened and come to a better understanding of how she was taken in by Meehan.

Being able to meet the person one is portraying is “a very unique, privileged experience and it helped give so much insight into the story in a way that maybe we weren't able to

experience in the podcast”, says the Emmy-nominated performer, star of the country-music drama Nashville (2012 to 2018).

Many people have dismissed Newell as a fool, but Britton believes they would have more empathy if they knew “how she was pulled in by this guy, which is so important”.

“Because, ultimately, we're telling the story of how a con man can be so effective.”

Her main objective, she says, is “to make Debra relatable so that we can all see ourselves in her and not just say, ‘Oh, well, that's because she's this or that.’ And she's been really wonderful and helpful with that”.

For Bana, the challenge was to convincingly play the villain despite the fact that his motivations are somewhat opaque.

The 50-year-old Australian actor, star of films such as Hulk (2003) and Munich (2005), says: “While there is a lot of factual information about John, I actually find him really mysterious.”

And as an actor, “there's a lot of stuff about him that I don't want to know”, Bana adds.

“Because when you're dealing with (a story) based on reality, you can either do something that's 100 per cent traceable to the exact facts of how they were, which can potentially be a little bit boring to watch.

“Or you can try and come up with something that has a sense of that person, which might be more interesting.”

His philosophy lines up with the show's overall approach to blending fact and fiction, according to creator Alexandra Cunningham.

While grounded in real events, the episodes will also use drama and emotion to pull the viewer into Newell's perspective, says the writer and executive producer, who also worked on Desperate Housewives (2004 to 2010).

This is where it will differ from the podcast, she says. “(The latter) is a fantastic work of investigative journalism, but what we're trying to do, especially in the beginning of the show, is to cast the spell that John casts over Debra.”

The idea is to snap viewers out of their preconceptions about how she was duped.

“One of the things that pains me the most is when people talk about ‘how Debra could be so stupid’,” she says.

“I actually think that's people's defence mechanism when they say that, because they like to believe that this wouldn't happen to them. And I know for a fact that it would.”

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• Dirty John is streaming on Netflix.

Exclusively for subscribers of The Straits Times

Asian Masters cooking demonstration by chef Selamat Susanto

Asian Masters returns for its seventh edition from March 1, 2019 till Feb 29, 2020 and celebrates the best of Asian gastronomy.

The programme line-up includes a series of cooking demonstrations by renowned chefs from top Asian restaurants.



The Straits Times is giving away 30 pairs of passes to this session on March 2 at 10am.

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This cooking demonstration by chef Selamat Susanto and hosted by ST senior food correspondent Wong Ah Yoke is part of Asian Masters 2019. True or False?

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Modern Family's incredible legacy

LOS ANGELES • Like its anchor couple, Modern Family was formed by shotgun marriage.

The veteran sitcom creators Steve Levitan and Christopher Lloyd, reasoning they would find more Hollywood success together than apart, came together expressly to make a network sitcom.

They scored a hit out of the gate in 2009 with their story of the extended clan of Claire and Phil Dunphy – only to have their differing sensibilities lead to a falling out by the second season.

But instead of acrimoniously ending things, they agreed to split custody of the ABC show, alternating which episodes each oversaw. Modern Family went on to become one of the biggest television phenomena of the current age.

ABC announced recently that this autumn will mark the show's last season, its 11th.

“Chris and Steve have created one of the most seminal and iconic comedies in television history,” ABC Entertainment president Karey Burke told reporters at the Television Critics Association in Pasadena, California, in announcing the ending of Modern Family.

It is indeed tough to overstate the success of the series, which has regularly drawn more than 10 million viewers an episode and is one of only two sitcoms in history to win the Emmy for outstanding comedy five times, all consecutive.

Yet for all its success, the show



(From far left) Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Sofia Vergara, Ed O'Neill and Eric Stonestreet in Modern Family. PHOTO: ABC

also has a complicated legacy. In many respects, it helped define the current business landscape. And that is why it – and anything like it – can probably never exist again.

At the time Modern Family entered the scene, the entertainment world looked more like it had for decades and less like it does today.

Netflix has just begun streaming its content instead of sending it by red envelope. Original programming outside of the traditional television set was not on anyone's mind – House Of Cards was more than three years away from debuting. Apart from one win for Sex And The City, the broadcast networks had taken every outstanding-comedy Emmy ever.

Modern Family was positioned to reap these benefits of a linear world. The show, produced by Twentieth Century Fox Television, would gather titanic audiences for a sitcom.

For much of its run, it averaged at least 11 million viewers a season, boosted by the way it represented a changed definition of the American family. In its third season, it averaged nearly 13 million viewers, many of them in the coveted 18-to-49 demographic.

In contrast, NBC's 30 Rock,

another repeat comedy-Emmy winner from the 21st century, averaged under six million most seasons.

By putting its own spin on a familiar motley-family conceit and docu-comedy style, the show turned things around for ABC. Most importantly, though, it provided a charge to the wider landscape.

Modern Family brought the idea that a TV comedy, even as viewership and consumer mind-share began to fragment, could both be broadly watched and a critical hit.

There have been some other long-running broadcast-network comedy smashes in the current era – The Big Bang Theory comes to mind.

But Modern Family stands out as a single-camera comedy – cinematic style shooting, no laugh-track – that still garnered a massive audience.

And the show repeated the rewards. Modern Family generated not just the usual local syndication deals, but also a splashy one on USA Network, which paid as much as US\$1.5 million (\$2 million) an episode. It even got sold and repackaged in places like Chile and Greece.

The end of Modern Family, along with Big Bang at the end of this current television season, will in all

probability mean the end of an era.

The highest-rated sitcoms now on broadcast television are either very new (Young Sheldon) or very old (The Conners).

If anyone wants an idea of how Modern Family comes from another business age, here it is: The show is not on Netflix. Twentieth knew it could monetise the show much better with these syndication deals than selling it to a streamer.

The show's scripts have by wide consensus been declining creatively for a while, as writers exhaust storylines and reach for contrivances and guest stars. Many fans began dropping off the Modern Family wagon a while ago – its viewership began declining in the seventh season, a trend that has accelerated since.

But the inevitable writerly ebb and flow of a TV show is only part of the story here, and does not hit at the more underlying business factors that will prevent a phenomenon of its ilk from happening again.

Modern Family may be getting long in the tooth creatively, leading to its demise. But from a business standpoint, it is nothing less than a dinosaur, and its species could well soon be extinct. WASHINGTON POST

Artist wins award for Bali work

Watercolourist Ong Kim Seng bags ninth award from American Watercolor Society for painting of Mount Agung before eruption

Ong Sor Fern
Senior Culture Correspondent

Singaporean watercolourist Ong Kim Seng has won his ninth award from the renowned American Watercolor Society and is the only Asia-based watercolourist to have bagged this many accolades.

In 2000, he picked up the Dolphin Fellowship by the society for winning five awards – already a notable achievement.

This year, the 73-year-old artist won the Anne Williams Glushien Award for his painting, Mount Agung Before Eruption. The painting is of Pura Lempuyang, a temple on top of a mountain between Singarajah and Ubud with a view of the volcano in the background.

The work will be exhibited as part of the 153-year-old society's annual show at New York's Salmagundi Club from April 1 to 31.

Although the society does not call it a competition, it is hard to gain entry to the exhibition as more than 2,000 works are submitted every year from artists around the world. From these entries, 125 to 130 works are selected for the show and only 25 are given awards.

The Cultural Medallion recipient has no plans to attend the show, saying: "New York is very far."

He took only 5½ hours to paint the piece as watercolour is a medium that demands speed. "The water dries very fast, especially in the tropics," he says.



Ong Kim Seng's painting was inspired by a study trip he led in Bali last May. Mount Agung erupted in June, a week after he returned home.
PHOTO: ONG KIM SENG

His painting was inspired by a study trip he was leading for 13 Chinese artists in Bali last May. The trip had been planned a year in advance and even the threatening volcanic rumbles did not deter the painter. Mount Agung erupted spectacularly in June, a week after the artist returned home.

Although Ong had painted a few pieces en plein air (French for in the open air) while in Bali, Mount Agung Before Eruption was actually composed later in his Singapore studio. "I created the atmosphere, added human beings to give some activity."

The modest artist downplayed

his achievement, saying: "I'm not placed in the first 10."

But any collector hoping to buy this award-winning work will be thwarted – it has already been sold to one of Ong's collectors for \$18,000. After he completed it, he showed it to a friend who fell in love with the piece and bought it. But he

agreed to let Ong send it to the society for the exhibition and even paid the freight charges.

Ong adds ruminatively: "I think, in life, we have to stretch a bit into the unknown by taking risks. It pays."

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Heartbroken? This museum wants a relationship memento

ZAGREB (Croatia) • Fed up with red roses and choking on chocolates during Valentine's Day? Then get a dose of reality at Zagreb's Museum of Broken Relationships, a paean to personal objects and stories of heartbreak.

The museum in the old town of the Croatian capital has exerted a strange pull since 2006 on tourists looking for a more offbeat experience.

Its exhibits are donated by ordinary people who want to share what went wrong in their love stories, or those of relatives or friends.

From a toaster to an exercise bike to a pair of lacy bras, the small museum imbues seemingly ordinary objects with meaning through captions that detail their role in the unravelling of relationships around the world.

The stories swerve from humorous to heartrending.

This year, it features the divorce of a Danish woman and her husband, a soldier who could not readapt to ordinary life after a tour of duty in Afghanistan – part of a whole new typology of trauma.

"We have eight thematic rooms related in some way to relationships falling apart, like family, sports, love stories in the business environment," said artist Drazen

Grubisic, one of the museum's founders. "A completely new topic is love relationships affected by war."

Particularly poignant is a vinyl record made by a young German in 1942 who dreamt of becoming a singer.

"It was a present for his girlfriend before he was sent to the war – where he was wounded in the throat and could not sing any more," Grubisic said. They never married, but she kept the record until she died.

One of the rooms with a lighter theme, called Take The Bitter With The Sweet, showcases objects such as a box of pizza-making ingredients – a love letter to one woman's break-up with gluten – and a diet book with the caption: "This was a present from my ex-fiance... Need I really continue?"

But the mood is heavier in Love In The Trenches, an exhibit with items such as a wedding dress from Turkey that was never worn because of the groom's unexpected death.

Nearby is a prosthetic leg from a Croatian war invalid who had an affair with a social worker.

"The prosthesis lasted longer than our love. It was made of sturdier material," says the caption.

The museum's unusual idea was



A prosthetic leg from a war invalid who had an affair with a social worker came with a caption saying: "The prosthesis lasted longer than our love. It was made of sturdier material." PHOTO: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

born from a heartbreak itself.

When Grubisic and fellow artist Olinka Vistica broke up in 2003 after a four-year romance, they did not know what to do with their shared belongings and wanted to create an option other than the bin.

More than a decade later, the Croatian duo have taken the museum on tour to 50 cities around the globe, collecting new objects and stories along the way.

"When we started with the project, I had no idea what (kind of donations) we were going to get... but it turns out that people are so interesting, everybody has a story to tell," Grubisic told Agence France-Presse, adding that they receive about 200 objects by mail a year.

Mr Jon Turner, 33, a Briton who was travelling solo in Zagreb, agreed the authentic portrayal of love is a fitting occasion for any visi-

tor on Valentine's Day.

"It's really beautiful, some things have made me laugh out loud, some things have made me cry, but, yeah, I think it's really nice – you get a snapshot of people's lives," he said.

The theme of the museum's next overseas stop, the city of York in England, will revolve around a different kind of break-up – Brexit, as the process of Britain's separation from the European Union is popularly known.

Organisers have put out a local call for donations that will offer a personal spin on the political drama.

"Recently ended a relationship? Wish to unburden the emotional load by erasing everything that reminds you of that painful experience?" the call of submissions asks.

"Don't," it advises, "one day you might regret it." AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, REUTERS

Hear ST readers' love stories



Life Picks host Melissa Sim (left) and reporter Olivia Ho share six love stories sent in by readers in celebration of Valentine's Day. ST PHOTO: ERNEST LUIS

Tune in to ST podcast Life Picks, in which Life reporters highlight the best films, concerts, restaurants and arts events.

This week, Life reporter Olivia Ho and host Melissa Sim read six love stories, each 200 words or fewer, which were sent in by readers and published in The Sunday Times on Feb 10 in celebration of Valentine's Day.

We received more than 150 entries. Thank you for writing in and we hope you enjoy our picks.



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SGTRAVELLERS



Roma, a Spanish-language movie set in 1970s Mexico City, has a documentary-like feel. It highlights the resilience of Cleo (Yalitza Aparicio, left), a housekeeper based on writer-director Alfonso Cuarón's (far left) childhood nanny. PHOTO: NETFLIX

Why black-and-white films may be gold

Oscar nominees Roma and Cold War convey the poignant memories of a distant past

LOS ANGELES • More than 50 years have passed since the Oscar categories honouring colour and black-and-white cinematography merged – and in that time, 1993's Schindler's List has been the only film of the latter style to win.

But monochrome's unlucky streak could soon come to an end – Roma and Cold War are this year's top picks for best cinematography, marking the first time since 1966 that multiple nominees have been shot in black-and-white.

The stories date to eras of personal significance for the filmmakers.

The Spanish-language Roma, set in 1970s Mexico City, highlights the resilience of Cleo, a housekeeper based on writer-director Alfonso Cuarón's childhood nanny.

Cold War, set in mid-20th-century Poland and France and told in six European languages, follows a tumultuous decades-long romance between a couple, Wiktor and Zula, loosely inspired by writer-director Paweł Pawlikowski's parents.

Whereas directors determine the overall vision of a film, cinematographers are the ones who physically execute it by leading the camera and lighting crews.

Cuarón served as his own cine-

matographer after scheduling conflicts led his usual collaborator, three-time Oscar winner Emmanuel Lubezki, to back out.

Pawlikowski chose to team up for a second time with Lukasz Zal, who recently won the top feature prize from the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) for Cold War.

Both movies were shot digitally, meaning they lack the softer aesthetic of movies shot on film decades ago. When paired with monochrome palettes and stories from the past, this visual crispness evokes the feeling of recalling distant yet poignant memories.

Cold War, for instance, is set against the backdrop of a conflict that did not culminate in traditional warfare. Pawlikowski chose to interpret the harsh effects of a totalitarian regime through memories of his parents' romance, according to Zal.

Black-and-white, Zal said, both nods to the past and "allows you to create your own interpretation".

But Roma and Cold War are exceptionally different black-and-white films. Cuarón's is more naturalistic, while Pawlikowski and Zal opted for a stylised look.

Much of Roma takes place in the spacious house of Cleo's employers, modelled after the home Cuarón grew up in. The various shades of



Cold War, about the romance between a singer (Joanna Kulig) and musician (Tomasz Kot, both above), has a stylised look. PHOTO: ANTICIPATE PICTURES

grey chosen for its interior and exterior achieve a gentle visual contrast in line with the overall aesthetic of the neighbourhood.

Cuarón used extensive tracking shots in which the camera moves parallel to the actors. The film has a documentary-like feel that Cuarón described as "a ghost of the present visiting the past, objectively without getting involved" on entertainment website IndieWire.

Take an emotional scene in which Cleo (Yalitza Aparicio) stands outside the house with her arms around the youngest child, Pepe (Marco Graf), their light-coloured clothes blending into the light grey wall.

His parents argue in the foreground, but Cuarón does not cut to Cleo or Pepe's reactions. The camera maintains a distance.

"It's mysterious and very emo-

tional," Lubezki said of Cuarón's style, according to IndieWire. "It feels like the camera and the cinematography are not there to illustrate; they are the film itself."

Cold War, on the other hand, operates in high contrast on every level. The film follows stoic musician Wiktor (Tomasz Kot) and young, uninhibited singer Zula (Joanna Kulig), who fall in love despite their differing temperaments. They meet at a Polish performance academy influenced by the oppressive regime and yet their wildly uncontrollable love burns bright.

Zal picked out reference points of black and white for every shot and constructed the rest of the image around them – a lesson he learnt from working on Ida (2013).

Production design, costuming and make-up followed suit. The dresses worn by women in Zula's singing troupe, for example, have dark bodices and vivid white sleeves. When Zula and Wiktor reunite in Paris, their dark attire often stands out against the pale walls of the glamorous buildings.

Zula, who thrived in Poland, feels suffocated in Paris. Zal captured her disconnectedness using a shallow depth of field, and upped the visual contrast to illustrate the couple's constant clashing.

"There were no shades of grey," Zalsaid.

At the Oscars, Roma and Cold War will also compete against each other in the foreign language and directing categories.

Ms Joyce Eng, a senior editor at awards prediction website Gold Derby, considers Cuarón a lock for best director. His best cinematography chances are strong, given the novelty of him being the first filmmaker to earn nominations in both categories at the same show.

But the ASC chose Zal, and academy members might feel inclined to share the wealth. Roma, after all, also received best picture, actress, supporting actress, original screenplay, production design, sound design and sound mixing nominations.

No matter the results, Ms Eng added, the evolution of the academy into a more diverse voting body could lead to more recognition for "exciting and dynamic film-making around the world".

The academy's taste is much more eclectic than it was when the categories merged, or even when Schindler's List took home the trophy. "Maybe black-and-white will become a little more in vogue now," she concluded.

WASHINGTON POST

Blackpink need bigger repertoire

REVIEW/CONCERT

BLACKPINK 2019 WORLD TOUR

IN YOUR AREA

Singapore Indoor Stadium/Last Friday

Jan Lee

For now, South Korean girl group Blackpink are gold.

Their song, Ddu-Du Ddu-Du (2018), is one of the most-viewed music videos for K-pop groups, with 665 million views, and they are slated to perform at California's music festival Coachella later this year.

And they showed why at their first concert here last Friday night.

Performing to a sold-out 9,500 crowd at the Singapore Indoor Stadium, the four members – Jennie, Jisoo, Lisa and Rose – were exuberant and charming onstage.

Kicking off their show with the dance-heavy Ddu-Du Ddu-Du and Forever Young (both 2018), they

performed all nine of their original songs as well as Jennie's solo track – titled Solo (2018) – and a tie-up track with British pop singer Dua Lipa, Kiss And Make Up (2018).

Their energy was infectious enough for a casual listener like me to feel like bobbing along to the music. I walked out of the show feeling I had a solid grasp of the group's performing chops.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said for their music. It is a shame that an outfit more than two years old has only one full album with nine songs.

Groups which debuted around the same time have easily chalked up over 20 songs so it is baffling that Blackpink have not stepped up the releases. Watching a concert – and this is only one stop in a world tour that includes Europe and the United States – with such a limited repertoire feels like watching a movie but not finishing it.

In every song, you catch a glimpse

of what the girl group are capable of in both ability and musical style, but there is just not enough for a fully satisfying experience.

Stay (2016), a folksy pop song, showed what the members can do with a mid-tempo, vocal-heavy, instrumental-based number. It built up anticipation for what they might be able to do with a traditional ballad or a soulful track.

Jennie and Lisa, the group's rappers, showed in Playing With Fire and Whistle (both 2016) that they can handle hard-hitting raps, but an unapologetic, no-holds-barred rap track has yet to materialise.

Midway through the set, each member had solo time in the spotlight and showed what she is capable of – Jennie with Solo; Jisoo with Clarity (2012) by Russian-German producer Zedd; Rose a mash-up with The Beatles' Let It Be, Park Bom's You And I and Taeyang's Only Look At Me; while Lisa did a solo dance.



The covers were enjoyable, but at this juncture in their careers, the group and the individual members need more original songs that are tailor-made for them to establish a strong musical identity.

Hopefully, they will return here one day with a fuller list of songs. But until then, Blackpink, with their spirited performances and beautiful looks, still showed why they can sell out arenas around the world.

Blackpink members (from left) Jisoo, Jennie, Rose and Lisa during the opening of their concert here last Friday. PHOTO: YG ENTERTAINMENT

Comics

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AM
6.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (PG) (V)
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7.00 First Look Asia (Simulcast From CNA) (CA)/9.00 The Dr Oz Show 10 (IE)
10.00 The \$100,000 Pyramid 2 (PG) (V)
10.30 Everyday Gourmet 3 (HD) (IE)
11.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (PG) (V)
PM
12.00 Martha Bakes 7 (IE)
12.30 Gordon Ramsay's Ultimate Cookery Course (IE)
1.00 Films & Stars (PG) (V)
1.30 Kin (PG) (CC) (D)
2.00 Phua Chu Kang Pte Ltd 4 (SC)
2.30 Body And Soul 6 (IE)
3.00 The Dr Oz Show 10 (IE)
4.00 Survivor 36 (PG) (V)
5.30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (PG) (V)
6.30 The \$100,000 Pyramid 2 (PG) (V)
7.00 Wheel Of Fortune 36 (CC) (V)
7.30 Little Big Shots US 3 (PG) (CC) (V)
8.30 Kin (PG) (CC) (D)
9.00 News 5 With Highlights From Parliament
9.45 Hands That Shaped The Nation: The Merdeka Generation (IE)
10.15 Avenue 14 (PG13) (CC) (D)
11.10 Grimm 6 (PG13) (D)
AM
12.00 Kin (PG) (CC) (D)
12.30 Lion Moms (PG13) (D)
1.30 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16 (PG) (V)
2.20 Hawaii Five-O 7 (PG) (D)
3.10 Lethal Weapon (PG13) (D)
4.10 Martha Bakes 7 (IE)
4.40 Gordon Ramsay's Ultimate Cookery Course (IE)
5.10 The Dr Oz Show 10 (IE)

CHANNEL 8

AM
6.00 3-Plus-14 (V)
7.00 Tuesday Report - The Dream Catchers (CC) (IE)
7.30 Hello Singapore Highlights (CA)
8.00 Walk With Me (PG) (CC) (D)
9.00 Morning Express (CA)
9.30 Jalan Jalan (PG) (CC) (D)

10.00 Food And Beverage Investigators 8 (IE)
10.30 Night Market Life Aka Life (PG) (D)
PM
12.30 Body SOS 7 (CC) (V)
1.00 News 8 At One
1.30 Focus (CC) (CA)
2.00 Beijing Opera Cats (S)
2.30 The Precedents (PG) (D)
3.30 The Golden Path (CC) (D)
4.30 Taste Of Life (PG) (D)
5.30 When Duty Calls (PG) (CC) (D)
6.30 Hello Singapore (CA)
7.30 Jalan Jalan (PG) (CC) (D)
8.00 Old Taste Detective (CC) (IE)
9.00 Walk With Me (PG) (CC) (D)
10.00 News Tonight
10.45 Hands That Shaped The Nation: The Merdeka Generation (CC) (IE)
11.15 Princess Agents (PG) (D)
AM
12.15 The Princess Weiyoung (PG) (D)
1.15 Super Taste 12 (V)
2.15 Fiery Passion (D)
4.10 A Place Called Home (PG) (D)

CHANNEL U

PM
3.00 Markets In Asia (CC) (IE)
4.00 Find Me A Singaporean 3 (IE)
5.00 Cheongdamdong Scandal (PG) (CC) (D)
6.00 The Girl Who Sees Smells (PG) (CC) (D)
7.00 My Father Is Strange (PG) (CC) (D)
9.00 Magic Chef (PG) (CC) (D) (Debut)
9.30 The Distance Between (PG) (CC) (D) (Debut)
10.00 Brother's Keeper 2 (PG) (CC) (D)
11.00 News Tonight
11.45 Magic Chef (PG) (CC) (D) (Debut)
AM
12.15 The Distance Between (PG) (CC) (D) (Debut)
12.40 My Father Is Strange (PG) (CC) (D)
2.30 Close

CNA

AM
6.00 Singapore Tonight
6.30 Money Mind
7.00 First Look Asia
9.00 Asia Business First

10.02 Trump's Showdown
11.00 News Now
PM
1.02 Blueprint For Survival
2.00 News Now
3.30 Singapore Budget 2019 "Live"
5.00 News Now
7.02 Blueprint For Survival
8.00 Primetime Asia
9.02 Undercover Asia 6 (CC)
10.00 Singapore Tonight
11.02 Blueprint For Survival
AM
12.00 News Now
12.30 Money Mind
1.02 Undercover Asia 6
2.00 News Now
2.30 Once A Refugee
3.02 Wild City/4.00 News Now
4.30 Once A Refugee
5.02 Undercover Asia 6
Programmes may be pre-empted by breaking news

VASANTHAM

PM
3.00 Super Samayal 4 (IE)
3.30 Anjaraipetti 5 (Cul)
4.00 Priyasakhi (D)
4.30 Vasantham Express 5 (IE)
5.30 Mighty Raju Animation Series (S)
6.00 Raama Seetha (PG) (D)
7.00 Konjam Soru Konjam Varalaru (CC) (IE)
7.30 Mella Thiranthatu Kathavu 3 (PG) (CC) (D)/8.00 Uyire (PG) (CC) (D)
8.30 Tamil Seithi (News)
9.00 Ms V Supreme 2019 (PG) (CC) (V)
10.00 Rowthiram (PG13) (CC) (D)
10.30 Nijangal (PG) (CC) (D)
11.00 Maalai Maalai Vasantham (V)
11.30 Tamil Seithi (News) (R)

AM
12.00 Close

OKTO

AM
9.00 Tip The Mouse (P)
9.30 Teddies (P)
10.00 Guess How Much I Love You (P)
10.30 Sesame Street (CC) (P)
11.00 Mouk (P)
11.30 Ready Jet Go! (P)

PM
12.00 Hiccup & Sneeze (P)
12.30 Teddies (P)
1.00 Coconut The Little Dragon (P)
1.30 Tip The Mouse (P)
2.00 Guess How Much I Love You (P)
2.30 Sesame Street (CC) (P)
3.00 Mouk (P)
3.30 Ready Jet Go! (P)
4.00 Odd Squad (S)
4.30 Captain Flinn And The Pirate Dinosaurs (S)
5.00 Littlest Pet Shop (S)
5.30 Marcus Level (S)
6.00 The New Powerpuff Girls (C)
6.30 Basic Mini-tary Training (S)
7.00 Timescapes (S)
8.00 The Violin (S)
8.30 Inazuma Eleven (CC) (S)
9.00 ATP 250: New York Open 2019 (Sports) (Delayed)
11.00 Battle Of The Network Stars (Sports)
AM
12.00 Close

SURIA

PM
3.00 Juxbox Ekspres
4.00 Bibik-Bibikku (PG) (D)
5.00 Rahsia Hati Perempuan (PG) (CC) (D)
6.00 BoBoiBoy Galaxy (S)
6.30 Apa Rasa? (IE)
7.00 Maklum Yang Paling Aku Cinta (PG) (CC) (D)
8.00 Berita (News)
8.45 Dansa Mania (CC) (V)
9.45 Mak Cun 4 (PG) (CC) (D)
10.45 Bingit (PG) (D)
11.45 Berita (News) (R)
AM
12.15 Close

C: Children; CA: Current Affairs;
CC: Closed Captions; Cul: Culture;
D: Drama; IE: Info-Ed; M: Movies;
P: Preschool; PG: Parental Guidance;
R: Repeat; S: Schoolkids; SC: Sitcom;
V: Variety

Programme schedules correct at time of printing. Telecast details from Mediacorp, StarHub and Singtel TV. For pay TV updates, go to www.starhub.com/tv or www.singtelv.com.sg

TheStarsSay

Aries (March 21 - April 19)
It is a great time to say hello to a new love interest or to shift gears and start off in a new direction.

Taurus (April 20 - May 20)
Today is all about your allies. Make sure they know how much you value them.

Gemini (May 21 - June 20)
Try not to worry too much about what is going on as the situation will likely clear up by the end of the day.

Cancer (June 21 - July 22)
You deserve whatever good things you do for yourself. Try to put your self-doubts on hold.

Leo (July 23 - Aug 22)
Your heart is big enough for two or three people. Fill the room with your good energy.

Virgo (Aug 23 - Sept 22)
Make plans. You should find that people are more willing to go along with your no-nonsense approach.

Libra (Sept 23 - Oct 22)
You need new ideas to move forward. It should not be that hard for you to shake up something.

Scorpio (Oct 23 - Nov 21)
This is not the time to ask for favours. The good news is your position should change for the better soon.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
All that positive energy is good for lots of things, especially creative endeavours.

Capricorn (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
You find yourself stretched too thin, but there is not much you can do to satisfy everyone.

Aquarius (Jan 20 - Feb 18)
A quick change brings a whole new way of seeing things. You should find that things are looking up.

Pisces (Feb 19 - March 20)
Try not to feel bad that friends are not making time for you – they just do not have much to spare now.

• Provided by Astrology.com (www.astrology.com)

Radio

KISS92

AM
6.00 Maddy, Jason & Arnold In The Morning
10.00 Weekdays With Carol Smith
PM
1.00 Weekdays With Charmaine Yee
4.00 On The Drive Home With Shan Wee
8.00 Josh's Goodnight Kiss

ONEFM 91.3

AM
6.00 Glenn & The Flying Dutchman
10.00 The Midday Brew With Charmaine Phua
PM
1.00 Afternoon Tune Up With Cheryl Miles
4.00 The Weekday Getaway With Divian Nair
8.00 Love Songs With Simon Lim

MONEY FM 89.3

AM
6.00 The Breakfast Huddle With Elliott Danker & Finance Presenter Ryan Huang
10.00 Midday With Howie Lim
PM
2.00 Prime Time With Claressa Monteiro
4.00 The Curve With Michelle Martin & Bernard Lim

UFM100.3

AM
6.00 UFM100.3 Mornings With Wenhong, Limei & Xiaozhu
10.00 Lively Life With Kevin
PM
1.00 Tea With Yuling
4.00 Sing-a-long With Xinying & Weilong
8.00 Feel The Night With Chengyao

96.3 HAO FM

AM
6.00 Morning Drive Time With Jing Yun, De Ming And Jie Qi
10.00 Lunch Break With Anna
PM
1.00 Automation
4.00 Evening Drive Time With Li Yi And Guo Xian
8.00 Night Time With Wei Wen

Tides

SUN RISE/SET TIME: 7:17am/7:21pm
MOON RISE/SET TIME: 6:10pm/5:42am

TIDES TODAY: Singapore: 3.48am (1.6m), 9.41am (3m), 4.16pm (0.3m), 11.28pm (2.8m). Desaru: 3.41am (1.9m), 8.20am (2.5m), 3.35pm (0.6m), 11.03pm (2.8m). Port Dickson: 5.50am (2.6m), 12.53pm (0.6m), 6.19pm (2.4m). Mersing: 3.36am (2m), 7.50am (2.3m), 2.49pm (0.7m), 10.16pm (3.3m).

TIDES TOMORROW: Singapore: 4.39am (1.4m), 10.31am (3.2m), 5.09pm (0.2m). Desaru: 4.26am (1.8m), 9.30am (2.6m), 4.26pm (0.5m), 11.41pm (2.9m). Port Dickson: 12.55am (0.1m), 6.34am (2.7m), 1.47pm (0.4m), 7.08pm (2.7m). Mersing: 4.22am (1.8m), 8.58am (2.5m), 3.48pm (0.6m), 10.59pm (3.4m).

For updates and more details, call Meteorological Service Singapore, NEA, on 6542-7788 or go to www.nea.gov.sg

StarHub TV

HISTORY (CHANNEL 401)

AM
6.40 Rising Sun Over Malaya
7.35 Forged In Fire 5
8.30 Forged In Fire: Knife Or Death
9.30 The Rise And Fall Of Pablo Escobar
11.20 Mountain Men 7
PM
12.15 The Curse Of Oak Island 4
1.10 The Pickers 12
2.05 Pawn Stars 19
2.35 Forged In Fire 5
3.30 Mountain Men 7
4.25 The Rise And Fall Of Pablo Escobar
6.15 Swamp People 8
7.10 Pawn Stars 18
8.05 Storage Wars: Texas 6
8.30 Storage Wars 11
9.00 The Pickers 9
9.55 Counting Cars 7
10.50 America's War On Drugs

LIFETIME (CHANNEL 514)

AM
6.00 Dance Moms 7
7.00 Man Vs Child: Chef Showdown 2
8.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16
9.00 Gok's Fill Your House For Free
10.00 Making A Model With Yolanda Hadid
11.00 Atlanta Plastic 2
PM
12.00 Dance Moms 7
1.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16
2.00 Four Christmases And A Wedding
3.35 The Rap Game 3
4.30 Little Women LA: Terra's Little Family
5.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16
6.00 Man Vs Child: Chef Showdown 2
7.00 Live PD Presents: Women On Patrol
8.00 Murder At Soho House
9.00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show 16
10.00 The Pastor's Wife
11.35 Man Vs Child: Chef Showdown 2

HBO (CHANNEL 601)

AM
6.35 Fahrenheit 451 (2018) (NC16)
8.15 Stop-Loss (NC16)
10.00 True Detective 3 (NC16)
11.00 Crashing 3 (NC16)
11.30 The 15:17 To Paris (NC16)
PM
1.05 Wonder Woman (PG)
3.20 Fantastic Mr Fox (PG)
4.45 Morning Glory (PG)
6.30 Inkheart (PG)
8.15 Equilibrium (NC16)
10.00 True Detective 3 (NC16)
11.00 Crashing 3 (NC16)
11.30 High Maintenance 3 (M18)

CINEMAX (CHANNEL 611)

AM
7.25 Congo
9.15 The Negotiator
11.30 Patriots Day (NC16)

PM
1.40 Black Hawk Down (NC16)
4.00 Pu-239
5.35 Spy Kids 3: Game Over
7.00 Driven
9.00 Strike Back 6 (NC16)
10.00 Scream (M18)
11.50 Cult Of Chucky (M18)

HUB E CITY (CHANNEL 825)

AM
6.00 Alpha Beta (HD)
7.00 Signal (HD)
8.15 Hot Door Night 16 (HD)
9.15 Dowry (HD)
10.15 I Am The Actor (HD)
11.30 Signal (HD)
12.15 Still Loving You (HD)
1.30 Signal (HD)
2.50 Where Are We Going, Dad? 5 (HD)
4.45 Still Loving You (HD)
6.00 Dowry (HD)
7.00 Hot Door Night 16 (HD)
8.00 Perfect Dating 6 (HD)
9.30 Hong Kong Neighbourhood Gems (HD)/10.00 Noble Aspirations (HD)
11.00 Hot Door Night 16 (HD)

HUB SPORTS 1 (CHANNEL 201)

AM
7.00 Tennis: ATP 500 Rio Open Presented By Claro HDTV 2018
9.00 Multi Sport: Action Sports World 2018
11.00 Snooker: 2019 The Masters Highlights
PM
2.30 Tennis: Deuce 2019
3.00 Multi Sport: Action Sports World 2019
4.00 Tennis: ATP 500 ABN Amro World Tennis: Tournament 2019
11.00 Multi Sport: Action Sports World 2019

HUB SPORTS 2 (CHANNEL 202)

AM
6.30 Magazine: Omnisport TV
7.00 Football: EFL Championship 2018 Matchday 33 Aston Villa Vs West Bromwich Albion
9.00 Magazine: Trans World Sport 2019
10.00 Football: EFL Championship 2018 Matchday 33 Blackburn Rovers Vs Middlesbrough (Same Day Delay)
PM
12.00 Magazine: Omnisport TV
12.30 Football: Ladbrokes Scottish Premiership 2018/19 Round 26 Motherwell Vs Heart Of Midlothian
2.30 Football: EFL League One 2018 Matchday 33 Sunderland Vs Accrington Stanley
4.30 Fiba World Basketball 2019
5.00 Magazine: National Icon 2019
5.30 Asean Basketball League 2018/19 Formosa Dreamers Vs Westports Malaysia Dragons/7.30 Magazine: Omnisport TV
8.00 Wrestling: WWE Experience (PG)
9.00 Magazine: National Icon 2019
9.30 Football: EFL Championship 2018 Matchday 33 Aston Villa Vs West Bromwich Albion
11.30 Magazine: Omnisport TV

Singtel TV

CARTOON NETWORK (CHANNEL 226)

AM
6.00 Oggy & The Cockroaches
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show
8.00 Teen Titans Go!
9.00 Grizzy And The Lemmings
9.30 The Tom And Jerry Show
10.00 We Bare Bears
10.30 Supernooobs
11.00 The Powerpuff Girls
PM
12.00 Teen Titans Go!
1.00 We Bare Bears
2.00 Ninjago: Masters Of Spinjitzu
2.30 Craig Of The Creek
3.00 Rat-A-Tat
3.30 The Amazing World Of Gumball
4.00 We Bare Bears
4.30 The Powerpuff Girls
5.00 Teen Titans Go!
5.30 Craig Of The Creek
6.00 Ben 10 Challenge
6.30 Oggy & The Cockroaches
7.00 The Tom And Jerry Show
7.30 Grizzy And The Lemmings
8.00 We Bare Bears
9.00 The Powerpuff Girls
10.00 Regular Show
10.30 Steven Universe
11.00 Clarence
11.30 Adventure Time

AXN (HD) (CHANNEL 304)

AM
6.00 MacGyver 2
6.50 Seal Team
7.40 American Ninja Warrior 7
9.25 MacGyver 2
10.15 Seal Team
11.05 Asia's Got Talent 3
PM
12.30 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2
1.20 Quantico 3
2.10 American Ninja Warrior 7
3.05 MacGyver 2
3.55 Seal Team
4.45 MacGyver 3
5.35 Seal Team 2
6.25 Instinct
7.15 Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders 2
8.10 Caught On Camera With Nick Cannon 2
9.05 Hawaii Five-0 9
10.00 Identity
11.50 Hawaii Five-0 9

WARNER TV (HD) (CHANNEL 306)

AM
6.00 Blindsport 3
6.50 Major Crimes 5
7.40 DC's Legends Of Tomorrow
8.25 Person Of Interest 4
9.15 The Flash 4
10.05 Blindsport 3
10.55 Almost Genius
11.45 Man Of Steel



Obituary

Swiss actor played Hitler in film Downfall



GENEVA • Bruno Ganz (left), the Swiss actor who gave masterful performances as Adolf Hitler in Downfall (2004) and as an angel seeking mortality in divided Berlin in Wings Of Desire (1987), died last Saturday aged 77, his agent said.

Ganz, who was suffering from cancer, died "in the early hours of the morning" at his home in Zurich, the agent added.

Considered one of the greatest German-speaking actors in the post-World War II era, Ganz had a distinguished career on screen and on stage before his appearance in Downfall, which unfolds over the final, suffocating days inside Hitler's underground bunker.

For many critics, his nuanced portrayal of the fascist tyrant that veers between explosive and sombre was unparalleled.

Hitler is a figure that German-speaking actors have historically been reluctant to take on and Zurich-born Ganz conceded that being Swiss provided a necessary buffer.

He won acclaim and some criticism for a performance shaped by historical records that showed a complex Hitler – at once unhealed and quivering as he berated his defeated generals, but who later displayed tenderness towards a frightened aide.

Ganz told British arts journalism website The Arts Desk that he was amused by those who chastised him for "humanising" the Nazi leader instead of portraying a caricature of evil.

People "need an intact icon of the evil itself", he said. "I don't know what evil itself is."

When asked if he approached the part with the mindset that Hitler was, in the end, a human being, Ganz said: "Of course he is. What else should he be?"

Before the Oscar-nominated Downfall, which vaulted Ganz into new levels of global fame, he had already been acknowledged as one of the most important German-language actors.

In 1996, he was given the Iffland-Ring, a jewel owned by the Austrian state, but held successively by the most significant performer in German theatre of the time.

His fame was based on theatrical performances such as a landmark starring role in Goethe's Faust. He played the part in a 21-hour production mounted by director Peter Stein that ran at the beginning of the century.

On-screen, his most prominent role before Downfall was in Wings Of Desire, in which he starred as the angel Daniel, who eavesdrops on ordinary, melancholy moments around pre-unification Berlin.

He also starred in American films such as The Boys From Brazil (1978), about Nazi war criminals and starring Gregory Peck and Laurence Olivier; and The Reader (2008), starring Kate Winslet.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Synonyms wins Golden Bear at Berlin festival

BERLIN • This year's Golden Bear for best feature film at the Berlin International Film Festival was awarded last Saturday to Synonyms, a dryly comic, largely autobiographical drama about a young Israeli trying to reinvent himself in modern-day Paris.

It was one of 16 films in competition at the festival, seven of which were directed by women.

In his acceptance speech, Nadav Lapid, the film's Israeli director,

dedicated the award to his mother, who died during production. The selection committee was headed by French actress Juliette Binoche.

Angela Schanelec of Germany took home the directing award for I Was At Home, But, an elliptical film about a widowed mother whose teenage son runs away from home.

In one of the most dramatic moments of this year's festival, One Second, a drama by acclaimed Chi-

nese director Zhang Yimou that is set during the Cultural Revolution, was removed from competition days before its planned premiere for "technical reasons", a term frequently used in China as a euphemism for government censorship.

The Silver Bear, the runner-up prize, was awarded to Francois Ozon's By The Grace Of God, a drama based on a real-life sexual abuse case within the Roman Catholic Church in France.

The film, a solemn work by the veteran French director, had been one of the most critically lauded in the festival. The French priest the film is based on, who is accused of abusing dozens of boys, has filed a lawsuit trying to delay the film's release in France.

Yong Mei took home the award for Best Actress and Wang Jingchun won Best Actor for their roles in the Chinese film So Long, My Son by Wang Xiaoshuai. In understated performances, the actors play a couple who lose their only son in an accident and are forced to cope with tumultuous events over several decades in China's history.

The Alfred Bauer Prize, for a feature that "opens new perspectives",

was awarded to Nora Fingscheidt's System Crasher, about a violent nine-year-old girl caught within the German social system.

Piranhas, an Italian crime drama whose screenwriters included Roberto Saviano, the Italian writer and author of Gomorrah (2006), took home Best Screenplay.

This year's festival is the last Berlinale, as it is known in Germany, to be overseen by Mr Dieter Kosslick, who has served as its director since 2001.

In recent years, he has drawn criticism for what some observers have seen as an overly broad curatorial approach to the festival, which has grown significantly during his tenure. In November 2017, 79 members of the German film industry signed an open letter arguing that the festival required a "new start".

Mr Kosslick will be replaced by two co-chiefs. Mr Carlo Chatrian, who was until recently artistic director of the Locarno Film Festival, will take over the Berlinale's artistic direction, while Ms Mariette Rissenbeek, previously managing director of German Films, a centre for the promotion of German filmmaking, will lead the business side of the festival. NYTIMES



Israeli director Nadav Lapid (above) won the top prize of best feature film for Synonyms (top), about a young Israeli trying to reinvent himself in modern-day Paris. PHOTOS: REUTERS, YOUTUBE

Academy scraps plan to award Oscars during commercial breaks

LOS ANGELES • Organisers of the Oscars ceremony have scrapped a plan to award four Academy Awards during commercial breaks in the telecast on Sunday, following an uproar by Hollywood filmmakers, actors and others.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said last Friday that it had heard feedback from members and that all 24 awards "will be presented without edits, in our traditional format".

It announced last week that the Oscars for best cinematography, film editing, short films and make-up/hairstyling would be presented during commercials in the telecast. It said edited versions of the winners' acceptance speeches would be aired later in the live broadcast.

The plan was part of an effort to make the Oscars telecast shorter

and boost TV viewership after it fell to an all-time low last year.

But an open letter, signed by directors Martin Scorsese and Spike Lee, actors Robert de Niro, Meryl Streep and George Clooney and more than 300 other Hollywood heavyweights, accused the academy of "relegating these essential crafts to lesser status" and insulting professionals who work in the four areas.

The reversal followed a meeting last Thursday between the cinematographers' union and top academy officials. Hollywood trade publication Variety cited an unidentified source as saying the decision means the telecast will now run over three hours as a result.

The changes, aimed at cutting about 30 minutes from the ceremony, were proposed last summer. REUTERS

On social media



LOVE BLOOMS FOR KATY PERRY: There is a new reason for Katy Perry to sing with joy. The pop star is engaged to actor Orlando Bloom, whom she started dating in early 2016, according to DPA.

The Firework singer and The Lord Of The Rings (2001 to 2003) star each shared a selfie on their Instagram accounts showing her wearing a flower-shaped ring.

"Lifetimes," Bloom captioned the photo, while Perry wrote "full bloom".

Perry's mother shared photos from the event on her Facebook page, writing in a since-deleted post, "Look who got engaged on Valentine's Day", said People.

Bloom, 42, and Perry, 34, were first romantically linked in January 2016. They broke up the following year, before rumours emerged early last year that they had rekindled their romance.

Perry was married to actor Russell Brand from 2010 to 2012, while Bloom was married to model Miranda Kerr from 2010 to 2013.

PHOTO: KATY PERRY/INSTAGRAM

'The Next Stop For Creativity' Talk

Come Face-To-Face With Singapore's Ambassadors Of Creativity

If you want to be the next influential creator, don't miss the opportunity to come up close and personal with two Singapore trailblazers and discover the key to sustainable growth for homegrown creations!

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Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre

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<http://next-wen-chuang.spevents.com.sg>
or scan the QR code



Talk will be conducted in English & Mandarin

Co-organisers:



Speakers



Nathan Yong
Founder, Nathan Yong Design
Singapore & the world: high-profile design collaborations



Dennis Tay
Founder, Nailse and Retailer at Design Orchard
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